

In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990. It is summarized by: "No person shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation." The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, programs and services provided by state and local government, goods and services provided by private companies, and in commercial facilities.

This Act includes provisions to accommodate hard of hearing people, including incorporating Assistive Listening Systems in new building construction, in alterations or renovations to buildings and facilities of private companies providing goods or services to the public. It also requires that State and local governments provide access for the hard of hearing in programs offered to the public.

## Types of Public Facilities that must Comply with ADA Requirements

Places of public accommodation that must comply with ADA requirements include restaurants, hotels, theaters, convention centers, retail stores, shopping centers, dry cleaners, Laundromats, pharmacies, doctors' offices, hospitals, museums, libraries, parks, zoos, amusement parks, private schools, day care centers, health spas, and bowling alleys.

Commercial facilities are required to comply with ADA. They include office buildings, factories and warehouses whose operations affect commerce.

Religious organizations (including places of worship), residential housing, and private clubs do not need to comply. However many places of worship voluntarily offer assistance for hard of hearing people.

## What is an Assistive Listening Device?

Under the mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act, to make public facilities accessible to persons with disabilities, thousands of public meeting areas have been and are being equipped with Assistive Listening Devices (ALD).

These installations are being designed to help hard of hearing people to better understand speech, music, and other sounds during a movie, performance, lecture, meeting or worship service.

Like a hearing aid, an assistive listening device makes sounds louder. Typically a hearing aid makes all sounds in the environment louder. An assistive listening device can increase the loudness of a desired sound (a radio or television, a public speaker, an actor or actress, someone talking in a noisy place) without increasing the loudness of the background noise.

People with all degrees and types of hearing loss-even people with normal hearing-can benefit from assistive listening devices. Some ALD are used with a hearing aid. Some can be used without a hearing aid.

## 2010 Notice of Changes in the ADA Standards for Accessible Design

In 2010 the Department of Justice's revised regulations for Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 were published in the Federal Register on September 15, 2010.

To review the complete scope and technical requirements for new construction and alterations resulting from the adoption of revised 2010 Standards in the final rules for Title II (28 CFR part 35) and Title III (28 CFR part 36) go to [http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards\\_index.htm](http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm).

## 2010 Changes To Assistive Listening Systems

### Compliance Date for Title II

If the start date for construction is on or after March 15, 2012, all newly constructed or altered State and local government facilities must comply with the 2010 Standards.

Before that date, the 1991 Standards (without the elevator exemption), the UFAS, or the 2010 Standards may be used for projects when the start of construction commences on or after September 15, 2010.

### Appendix to 35.151 (c)

Compliance Date for New Construction or Alterations	Applicable Standard
Before September 15, 2010	1991 Standards or UFAS
On or after September 15, 2010 and before March 15, 2012	1991 Standards, UFAS, or 2010 Standards
On or after March 15, 2012	2010 Standards

### 219 Assistive Listening Systems

**703.7.2.2.216.10 Assistive Listening Systems.** Each assembly area required by 219 to provide assistive listening systems shall provide signs informing patrons of the availability of the assistive listening system. Assistive listening signs shall comply with 703.5 and shall include the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss complying with 703.7.2.4.

**EXCEPTION:** Where ticket offices or windows are provided, signs shall not be required at each assembly area provided that signs are displayed at each ticket office or window informing patrons of the availability of assistive listening systems. **(Such as the Listen Technologies Corporation LA-304 ADA Signage Kit)**



**Assistive Listening System (ALS).** An amplification system utilizing transmitters, receivers, and coupling devices to bypass the acoustical space between a sound source and a listener by means of induction loop, radio frequency, infrared, or direct-wired equipment.

**219.1 General.** Assistive listening systems[i] shall be provided in accordance with 219 and shall comply with 706.

**219.2 Required Systems.** In each assembly area[ii] where audible communication is integral to the use of the space[iii], an assistive listening system shall be provided.

**Assembly Area.** A building or facility, or portion thereof, used for the purpose of entertainment, educational or civic gatherings, or similar purposes. For the purposes of these requirements, assembly areas include, but are not limited to, classrooms, lecture halls, courtrooms, public meeting rooms, public hearing rooms, legislative chambers, motion picture houses, auditoria, theaters, playhouses, dinner theaters, concert halls, centers for the performing arts, amphitheaters, arenas, stadiums, grandstands, or convention centers.

# ADA General Guidelines



**706.3 Receiver Hearing-Aid Compatibility.** Receivers required to be hearing-aid compatible shall interface with telecoils in hearing aids through the provision of neckloops. **(Such as the Listen Technologies Corporation LA-166 with any FM system or IR system that has a headset output jack)**

**Advisory 706.3 Receiver Hearing-Aid Compatibility.** Neckloops and headsets that can be worn as neckloops are compatible with hearing aids. Receivers that are not compatible include earbuds, which may require removal of hearing aids, earphones, and headsets that must be worn over the ear, which can create disruptive interference in the transmission and can be uncomfortable for people with hearing aids.

## **New (2010 ADA)**

**219.1 General.** Assistive listening systems shall be provided in accordance with 219 and shall comply with 706.

**219.2 Required Systems.** In each assembly area where audible communication is integral to the use of the space, an assistive listening system shall be provided.

**EXCEPTION:** Other than in courtrooms, assistive listening systems shall not be required where audio amplification is not provided.

**219.3 Receivers.** Receivers complying with 706.2 shall be provided for assistive listening systems in each assembly area in accordance with Table 219.3. Twenty-five percent minimum of receivers provided, but no fewer than two, shall be hearing-aid compatible in accordance with 706.3.

**Assistive Listening System (ALS).** An amplification system utilizing transmitters, receivers, and coupling devices to bypass the acoustical space between a sound source and a listener by means of induction loop, radio frequency, infrared, or direct-wired equipment.

**(Such as the Listen Technologies Corporation LS-03 Performance FM System or LS-85 Performance IR System)**

**Assembly Area.** A building or facility, or portion thereof, used for the purpose of entertainment, educational or civic gatherings, or similar purposes. For the purposes of these requirements, *assembly areas* include, but are not limited to, classrooms, lecture halls, courtrooms, public meeting rooms, public hearing rooms, legislative chambers, motion picture houses, auditoria, theaters, playhouses, dinner theaters, concert halls, centers for the performing arts, amphitheaters, arenas, stadiums, grandstands, or convention centers.

**Table 219.3 Receivers for Assistive Listening Systems**

Capacity of Seating in Assembly Area	Minimum Number of Required Receivers Contact Listen for customized quote to accommodate area <a href="http://www.listentech.com">www.listentech.com</a>	Minimum Number of Required Receivers Required to be Hearing Aid Compatible (Using Listen LA-166)
50 or less	2	2
51 to 200	2, plus 1 per 25 seats over 50 seats *	2
201 to 500	2, plus 1 per 25 seats over 50 seats *	1 per 4 receivers*
501 to 1,000	20, plus 1 per 33 seats over 500 seats *	1 per 4 receivers*
1,001 to 2,000	35, plus 1 per 50 seats over 1,000 seats *	1 per 4 receivers*
2,001 and over	55, plus 1 per 100 seats over 2,000 seats *	1 per 4 receivers*

**\*Or fraction thereof**