



Marietta Fire Marshal's Office

Accessibility for Bar Seating Explanation

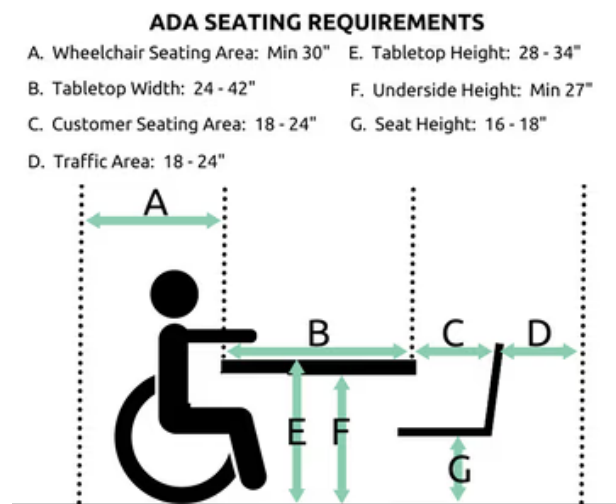
The Georgia Accessibility Code (O.C.G.A. 30-3-1) and ADA Standards for Accessible Design were established to ensure equal access for individuals with disabilities, preventing their exclusion from everyday activities. One such activity enjoyed by many is dining at restaurants. To ensure a fair experience for all guests, the ADA requires restaurants to have accessible seating available in at least 5% of dining surfaces in each functional area.

The term "each functional area" is crucial because restaurants often consist of multiple functional areas. For instance, a restaurant may have an interior dining area, a bar seating area, and an exterior patio, constituting at least three separate functional areas. Other factors that impact the number of functional areas include views, amenities, and physical separation. Consequently, each functional area must be considered independently to determine the minimum number of required accessible seats.

Although interior dining table seating and interior bar counter seating may seem like a single functional area, bars offer a distinct experience compared to dining tables. Guests sitting at bars can observe food and drinks being prepared and often have direct views of TVs and entertainment. Additionally, companions sit side by side at bars rather than across from each other.

If a facility provides a bar counter with 20 or fewer seats, it must have at least one accessible seat at the bar to ensure an equal experience. Meeting this requirement involves lowering a portion of the main counter to a maximum height of 34 inches measured from the floor to the top of the counter surface. The seating space should be situated on an accessible route, accommodating a forward approach with adequate knee and toe clearance. The accessible seating must be integrated with the main counter to afford the same viewing experience from a seated position. It's important to design the low counters without back splashes or high counters that obstruct the view behind the counter, and they should not be used as server stations or transaction counters.

Advisory: A restaurant cannot simply add an accessible table near the bar or add a flip-up counter if full compliance is 'Readily Achievable.' 'Readily Achievable' in the simplest terms, means businesses must comply with the ADA if they have the resources to do so.



A detail showing accessible bar seating will be required for plan approval, and must be installed prior to the Fire 100% inspection.