



# Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Furniture Considerations: FAQs

**Q:** What is ADA?

**A:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law, enacted in 1990, aimed at preventing discrimination against and providing equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Concepts related to workplace design are most comprehensively covered in Title II (Public Services) and Title III (Public Accommodations) of the ADA.

**Q:** Can a product be ADA-certified?

**A:** Though products can be designed to meet ADA guidelines, the federal government does not issue approvals or certify specific products as ADA-compliant, nor does any other body. The application, placement, and surroundings of the product within the space impact accessibility and usability. Any company “certifying” products to the ADA is providing information about the product only based on its own interpretations.

Buildings and workspaces can be determined to be compliant when assessed by the federal government, though this typically happens only if there is a complaint. Consultants and experts not associated with the federal government can be helpful interpreting and implementing ADA regulations and may show a “good faith effort” has been made to meet the regulations, however they do not have the ability to “certify” spaces.



**Q:** Does Allsteel | Gunlocke furniture meet the ADA design requirements?

**A:** Many Allsteel products include features allowing for adjustment to an individual's needs or comfort level—whether the individual is disabled or interested in using ergonomics to reduce the risk for development of a work-related musculoskeletal disorder.

The 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design specifically state furniture that is not fixed to a floor or a wall is not subject to these standards. This is the case because product dimensions are not the only consideration for accessibility. Holistic consideration of universal usability includes attention to where the product is placed, and consideration of clearances, maneuverability throughout the space, and approachability. ADA-related assessments are individualized and generally involve the employee, the employer, and the health care provider.

**Q:** What things do designers need to consider for ADA?

**A:** Universal design and ADA considerations require attention to many aspects of use including, but not limited to clearance requirements (heights, depths, and widths), ease of approachability and maneuverability within the space, and the ease of manipulation of knobs, handles, or adjustments. The interior spaces should be considered, as well as the entrances, parking areas, and restrooms.

**Q:** What things are important to know when specifying worksurfaces, tables, or desks?

**A:** Although table dimension considerations alone are not sufficient to comply with ADA standards, designers should be aware of standards including, but not limited to:

- Height of surface between 28" and 34" above the finished floor
- Depth clearance of 25" or more under the worksurface
- Width clearance of 30" or more

Remember however, approach, accessibility, clearance, and maneuverability need to be assessed holistically within the space.

**Q:** What things are important to know about drawer pulls?

**A:** Designers should be aware of standards related to drawer pulls including, but not limited to:

- Handles, pulls, latches, and locks can be operated with one hand and do not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist to operate
- Activation requiring 5.0 lbs of force or less to activate

## Universal design and ADA considerations require attention to many aspects

**Q:** What things are important to know when specifying demountable walls?

**A:** Designers should be aware of standards including, but not limited to:

- All door openings meet or exceed 32" clear width and 80" vertical clearance
- All operable door handles located between 34" and 48" above the finished floor
- Handles, pulls, latches, and locks can be operated with one hand and do not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist to operate
- Doors require enough space for maneuverability for entrance, exit, and turning
- Forces required to fully open doors does not exceed 5.0 pounds (force requirement does not apply to latching bolts or other devices that hold the door in a closed position)

Allsteel Beyond and Aspect doors and hardware meet the above. Remember however, approach, accessibility, clearance, and maneuverability need to be assessed holistically within the space.

**Q:** Where can I go to find more information?

**A:** The 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and other information about the Americans with Disabilities Act can be found at [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov). There is also an information line which can provide answers to specific questions, found here: <https://www.ada.gov/infoline.htm>

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