

# Installing a level access shower

## Occupational Therapy

**When installing a level access shower please consider the following guidelines:**

### Shower

- The recommended floor space for a standard level access shower is 1200mm by 1200mm.
- Consider the best position for the wet area shower; it is usually in a corner free of a window. The shower should be away from the door to prevent water from damaging the doorframe or carpet/flooring.
- Consider existing lighting and switches as these may be affected by the alterations. If they are within 500mm of the shower curtain they require waterproof fittings.
- The shower should have a 1:50 gradient towards the toe. The toe is the lower part of the sloping floor which would be where the waste is situated. This must be recessed into the shower floor to allow good access.
- Concrete floors need to be saw-cut and chiselled out to slope the shower area. To set the required fall it needs to be plastered a smooth, even finish ready to take the vinyl flooring.
- Timber floors are usually cut and new opening trimmed as per NZS3604. The area needs to be reframed to achieve the required fall.
- Install a purpose designed non-slip vinyl flooring i.e. Tarkett, Multisafe, Plyflor, Forbo, Altro or similar. Tiles are not recommended.
- The floor covering needs to be extended up the shower walls by approx. 200mm.
- An appropriate wall lining is required i.e. Hardi-glaze or Aquapanel.
- Make sure the alterations adhere with the Building Code. Check if this requires a building consent, as most districts in New Zealand require this.
- Stainless steel rails are recommended as they will not rust.





Figure 1: Slide shower



Figure 2: Separate

mixer

## Fittings

- Consider the slide shower and mixer. A slide shower (figure 1) and separate mixer (figure 2) is recommended.
- A lever action water mixer is the easiest for people to manage independently.
- A weighted shower curtain needs to be fitted to form the enclosure of the wet area. The curtain track should be positioned 100mm within the shower area (i.e. 1100x1100mm) and of sufficient length to make contact with the floor.

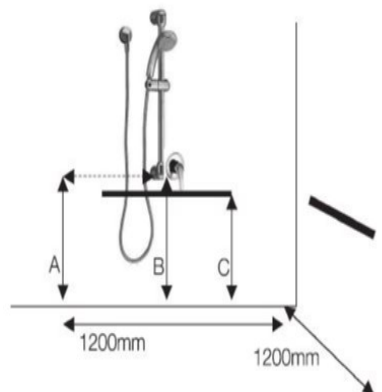


Figure 3: Level access shower

- A: Height of slide shower from floor should be a minimum of 1000mm.
- B: Height of shower mixer should be a minimum of 1000mm from floor.
- C: Height of rail from floor should be between 850 and 950mm.

## Fitting heights

- The shower mixer must be able to be used clear of any handrail; check this before installing the rails and mixer.
- The water mixer should be a minimum of 1000mm from the floor.
- Recommended height of rails from the shower floor is between 850mm and 950mm, or as advised by your occupational therapist.
- The base of the slide shower is usually about 950mm from the shower floor; alternatively the maximum height should be no higher than 1900mm. Consider whether the person will be sitting or standing to shower and fit the slide shower accordingly.



Figure 4. Wheelchair accessible basin

### Wheelchair accessible basin

- The height of the basin from floor to below basin should be a minimum of 675mm (refer to figure 4).
- The basin must allow clearance for the person's knees and feet when seated in wheelchair or shower commode.
- The ideal height will vary for individual users, as leg length and thigh height vary considerably.
- Taps should have lever handles for ease of use for people with limited hand function.

### References

- Booth, G (1996). *Construction of a wet area shower*. Wellington, New Zealand: Graham Booth.
- Enable New Zealand. (2006). *Housing Modification Manual*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Enable New Zealand
- Standards New Zealand (2001). NZS 4121:2001 *Design for access and Mobility—Buildings and associated facilities*.
- Website: Enable New Zealand <http://www.enable.co.nz/>
- Website: Ministry of Health Disability Support Services <http://disabilityservices.hiirc.org.nz/>

### Disclaimer

The enclosed information is to be used as a guide only. Canterbury DHB and the authors accept no responsibility for decisions made, work carried out or losses suffered (by anyone) in reliance upon this information. If you have any questions about this information, please contact the occupational therapist who gave this to you.

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