



## **Subject: Mats and the ADA**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has led to a lot of questions regarding how ADA affects mats and matting. ADA is the law, and the law is enforced by the Justice Department. To help the Justice Department enforce ADA, a federal organization called the U.S. Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (known by the shortened version, "Access Board") prepares ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). Interpretation of these guidelines has led to questions regarding how ADAAG treats floor mats. The question raised most frequently was, "Are mats subject to the ADA accessibility guidelines in section 4.5 and specifically sub-sections 4.5.2 and 4.5.3.

Section 4.5 Ground and Floor Surfaces, sub-section 4.5.2 discusses "Changes in Level" for floors and floor surfaces. Sub-section 4.5.3 relates to "Carpet" used on a ground or floor surface.

Crown passed these questions along to the Access Board.

The Access Board reported that ADAAG deals specifically with fixtures and facilities that are "built in" at the time of construction or as a result of any remodeling or refurbishing. According to the Access Board, mats and matting products are considered "furnishings" and do not fall under the provisions of ADAAG. However, the Board cautioned that the intent of any guidelines issued is to insure that "ground and floor surfaces be *maintained* in a stable, firm and slip-resistant condition."

A key strength of CROWN mats is that their nature and function is to enhance the firmness, stability and slip-resistance of floor surfaces. In order to fulfill this function and to comply with the intent and guidelines of ADA, mats must not present a trip hazard and must be maintained so that they remain safe, firm, and slip resistant. The care and maintenance instructions packaged with each mat explain in detail how to care for your mats so that they enhance safety and accessibility.

In summary, ADAAG deals specifically with "built in" fixtures. Matting does not fall under the ADA accessibility guidelines. Properly maintained mats actually contribute to a facility's compliance under ADA by reducing slip and fall hazards due to wet or slippery floors.

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