



## **ADA<sup>1</sup> ALERT: Nurse Call Systems in Employee Work Areas**

The central question is who uses the nurse call station at the headwall? If this is a family member or visitor, then the nurse call is public. This makes the headwall component of the nurse call system an accessible element that needs to be mounted no higher than 48" to the highest operable part<sup>2</sup>. Non-compliance to the ADA may result in fines and penalties.

For existing systems being upgraded (built before 2012), you may use the existing location of the nurse call station, provided it is no higher than 54" to the highest operable part of the new upgrade.

If the nurse call station at the headwall does NOT have a method to call a nurse and only has the nurse call cancel function, then it would be strictly for employees and as an employee work area, does not have a height requirement. Nurse call stations at all other locations (such as patient restroom, showers, dressing rooms) MUST be fully accessible<sup>3</sup>

Employee work areas<sup>4</sup> must have an accessible circulation path (approach, enter and exit)<sup>5</sup>. This is the only requirement. Work surfaces only used by employees, such as a computer desk by the bedside, are not required to be accessible<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, all footnotes are from this document.

<sup>2</sup> 308.2 Forward Reach; 308.3 Side Reach.

<sup>3</sup> Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

<sup>4</sup> 208.2.8 Employee Work Areas.

<sup>5</sup> 203.9 Employee Work Areas.

<sup>6</sup> Advisory 226.1, but are subject to Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for "reasonable accommodations".