

**State Bar of Arizona Task Force on Persons with Disabilities  
Accessibility Committee Site Visit  
Arizona Court of Appeals, Division Two  
Tucson, Arizona**

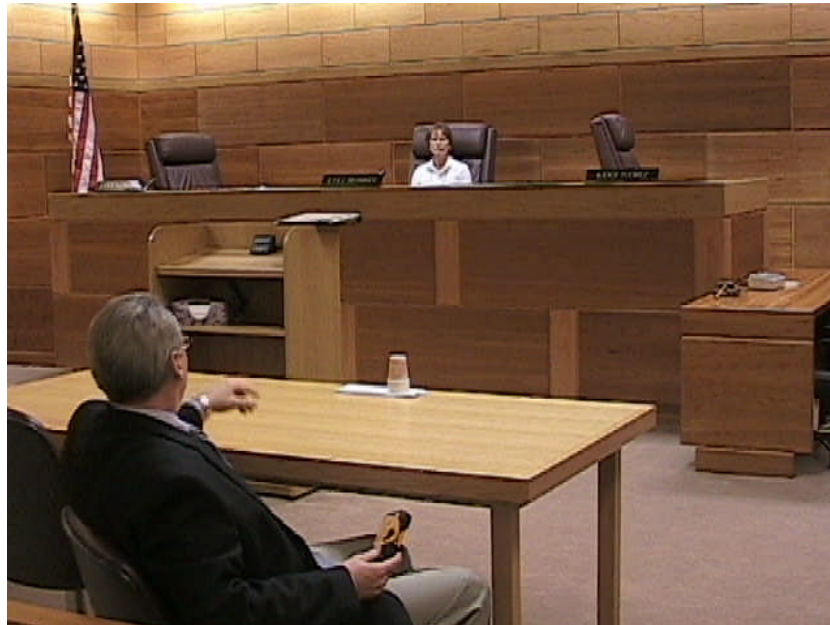
**SURVEY BACKGROUND**

**Facility:** Arizona Court of Appeals, Division Two, 400 W. Congress, Tucson, AZ 85701

**Date:** November 5, 2003

**Team:** Paula Nailon (team leader, University of Arizona College of Law); Joe Parkhurst (Attorney General's Office); Dee-Dee Samet, Esq.; Bill Sheldon (State Compensation Fund)

**Court Personnel:** Hon. Philip Espinosa (Presiding Judge) and Mary Ann Clark (Clerk's office)



**Overview**

This is a relatively new building, and enjoys modern accommodations. Court personnel were extremely helpful during the tour and very well-informed about ADA standards and accommodations for persons with disabilities. They displayed a willingness to make accommodations as needed to satisfy special circumstances, and said the Building & Maintenance Departments were responsive to their needs.

## **Parking**

There is ample accessible parking on the street floor of the visitor parking lot.

## **Entrances and Exits**

The courthouse is located in a building on the northwest side of an intersection and can be accessed from the east (street side) and west (visitor parking lot). Entrance to the court's facilities (located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor) is through an elevator located just off a central, interior courtyard. The elevator controls are extremely high (about 18" too high). One of our site team members previously worked as a law clerk at the court and said he had to use a stick to press the buttons.

Suggestion: Relocate the elevator controls. This may be the responsibility of the elevator maintenance company, or at a minimum the company would have the technical ability to implement the change at court expense.

## **Security/Emergency Evacuation**

There are no security measures on the first floor. A security post is established at the public entrance to the courtroom and personnel take whatever measures are necessary to accommodate someone with a disability.

The Court provided a copy of its emergency evacuation procedures. There are ample stairwells and a Floor Warden oversees evacuation procedures. During a fire or similar emergency, Court staff notify the Warden of visitors with disabilities, then move them to a nearby stairwell where, ideally, a court facility "buddy" will wait with them while warden communicates with the proper authorities. During a bomb scare, the judge thought the elevators would be activated for people with disabilities. Fire extinguishers were located at an appropriate height.

Suggestion: The Court wasn't sure and we could not locate where the fire alarms were located. They should be clearly visible.

## **Restrooms** (Both employee and public)

### **Women's**

The doorways are wide, the weight of doors is appropriate and they are easy to open. The stall doors are wide enough, but the public stall door didn't close all the way. Counters were mounted at an appropriate level and sinks were easy to use and equipped with levers and knobs. Soap and paper products were easy to reach also.

### **Men's**

The doorways are wide, the weight of doors is appropriate and they are easy to open. In the employees' restroom, the stall door handle is too high. Counters were mounted at an appropriate level and sinks were easy to use and equipped with levers and knobs. Soap and

paper products were easy to reach also. In the public restroom, though, the accessible stall was a child urinal, and the privacy panel was 6-8" too close. Also, about 1' of additional space is needed beside the toilet in the accessible stall, to facilitate a side transfer from a wheelchair.

Suggestion: Install a urinal for a person with a disability (deeper and extends further than the child's version), and move the privacy panel. An additional urinal may have to be removed for this purpose, but given the light traffic on this floor, that should not be a problem. Provide sufficient space in the accessible toilet stall for a side transfer.

## **Hallways**

Hallways are wide.

Suggestion: Provide one bench where people may stop to rest, if necessary.

## **Library**

The library rates an A+ in all areas. *(Note: Ask Paula to expand)*

## **Courtrooms**

### **Access to Judges' Chambers**

Suggestion: The call button outside the chambers door is about 12" too high and situated over a shelf. We recommend it be lowered, and moved to the side of the shelf.

### **Courtroom**

The doorways are wide, but the doors are heavy and hard to open. We were told Security guards help when court is in session. Aisles are wide and there is sufficient turnaround room. Courtroom tables are an appropriate height and ramps are not needed. The podium is too high for a person using a wheelchair to use, and an attorney using a wheelchair generally speak from counsel's table. While seated, they are visible to all judges on the Bench. The Court requests attorneys to notify them of accommodations needed and makes every effort to provide them. The Judge did not know whether assisted hearing devices were available, but we assume they are, since no problems have occurred.

Suggestion: The carpet is so thick that it would be hard to move in a non-automated wheelchair. But this is a low priority issue.

## **Conclusion:**

This is a relatively new building, and visitors enjoy its modern accommodations. Court personnel were extremely helpful during the tour and very well-informed about ADA standards and accommodations for persons with disabilities. They displayed a willingness to make accommodations as needed to satisfy special circumstances and needs, and said the Building and

Maintenance Departments were responsive to requests for accommodations on behalf of courthouse users.