

# Compliance & Mandatory ADA Changes on Assistive Listening

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA prohibits discrimination by requiring accessibility to a variety of public and private buildings, including new construction, alterations, or renovations to buildings and facilities. Essentially, owners of public facilities must remove barriers and provide people with disabilities with accommodation equal to, or similar to, those available to the general public, including providing assistive listening devices (ALDs) for hard of hearing people.

## Changes for Assistive Listening Systems in ADA Requirements

Changes were made in 2010 to the ADA related to assistive listening systems. These changes went into full effect on March 15, 2012. The changes are on all newly constructed or altered facilities with assembly areas and states that these must comply with the 2010 ADA Standards for assistive listening systems.

*In each assembly area, where audible communication is integral to the use of the space, an Assistive Listening System (ALS) shall be provided.*

*Twenty-five percent (25%) minimum of receivers provided, but no fewer than two, shall be hearing-aid compatible. Each assembly area required to provide assistive listening shall provide signs informing patrons of the availability of the assistive listening system. These signs shall comply with the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss.*

Assembly areas include, but are not limited to: classrooms, lecture halls, courtrooms, public meeting rooms, legislative chambers, motion picture houses, auditoria, theatres, playhouses, dinner theatres, concert halls, performing arts centres, amphitheatres, arenas, stadiums, grandstands, and convention centres.

## More Than Compliance

36 million people, or 17% of the US population has a measurable degree of hearing loss.\* The significance becomes even more apparent when compared to 1.4% with a physical disability and 0.14% with a visual disability. Increasingly, hearing loss is on the rise and impacts society in many ways.

Assistive listening products help solve common sound problems caused by distance, background noise, reverberation, or poor room acoustics. By providing those who are hard of hearing access in and around your building, opportunities are created for increased business. According to government accounting "businesses that made accessibility improvements experienced a 12% increase in business." Disabled Americans have \$175 billion in discretionary spending power and a consumer spending power of \$220 billion annually. In addition, there may be tax benefits available for making audio materials available to hearing-impaired individuals.\*\*

*\*Using the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of 'hearing loss' as an individual not being able to hear sounds of 25 decibels or less in the speech frequency range.*

*\*\*Tax form 8826 : <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8826.pdf>*

## Signature of Understanding

I have read and understand the 2010 ADA changes related to compliance for assistive listening systems in public assembly areas.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Waiver of Assistive Listening System (ALS) Installation

I have read and understand the 2010 ADA changes related to compliance for assistive listening systems in public assembly areas. I am electing *not* to include an assistive listening system and release the contractor of any responsibility.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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*You should always obtain legal advice that is specific to you and your situation. This is general information only.*