Availability of Restrooms in the United States and Federal Public Health Mandates:

A Call to Action

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American Restroom Association

World Toilet Summit 2007

American Restroom Association

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America's advocate for the availability of clean, safe, well-designed public restrooms.

American Restroom Association

Non-profit, tax-exempt, all-volunteer organization

- Restroom availability and accessibility
- Restroom design and technology
- Pertinent legislation, regulations and codes
- Documenting problems faced when people cannot find toilet facilities away from home

US Public Health Mandates and the Restroom Problem in America

A Call To Action

Not enough toilets are available to the public.

Policy gaps at the national level.

The American Restroom Association is working to fix this problem.

America’s Restroom Problem

Local governments are closing restrooms.

Closings continue despite changing demographics and growing demand.

Limited hours

Winter closings

Why?

Maintenance costs.

Crime: vandalism, drug sales & use,
commercial sex.

Behavior inappropriate for restrooms.

Government-supported schools are preventing students from using restrooms.

Why?

- Graffiti and vandalism
- School violence elsewhere
- Threats
- Emergency lock down drills

Students require escorts, passes, or logs.

Academic credit sometimes given for not using the restroom.

Denial of restroom use is punishment.

Toilet use and hand washing
depend on good behavior,
not health policy.

Transit systems put restrooms off limits.

In 1940 New York subway had 1,676 toilets.

Today: less than 100 for 4 million riders.

Why?

- Rising costs
- Budget shortfalls
- Construction blocks access
- Post-Sept 11 fears

Transit employees have restrooms;
transit customers do not.

Impractical to open at passenger request

Airlines can deny passengers use of toilets throughout flights.

No federal regulation on passenger-to-toilet ratio.

Legal for most commercial planes to fly without a working restroom.

Some regularly scheduled flights have a single toilet. It can be closed if non-functional, soiled, or the light is out.

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Pilots decide whether to divert plane or continue flight.

When restrooms are not available,
it hurts society.

People “go” in the wrong places.

Doorways and alleys are dirty and smelly.

Livability is compromised.

Maintenance costs rise.

Denial of toilet use is denial of a basic human right.

Society criminalizes urination and defecation in the wrong place.

When restrooms are not available,
it hurts individuals.

Stress and humiliation

Involuntary retention physical and mental problems

No hand washing risk of illness

Individuals can’t exercise out of doors physical fitness suffers

Individuals can’t join their families for activities in public places.

What can we do?

- Recognize toilet use and hand washing as public health issues.
- Work at the federal policy level.

U.S. Department of Labor

Regulates workplace restrooms through the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or OSHA.

OSHA regulations ensure that employees "will not suffer the adverse health effects that can result if toilets are not available."

Excellent set of regulations based on health research.

"... *requires employers to provide their employees with toilet facilities so that they will not suffer the adverse health effects that can result if toilets are not available...”*

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29 CFR 1910.141(c)(1)(i): Toilet Facilities

But authority is limited to the workplace.

Employees have protection;
ordinary citizens do not.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Mandate is “protecting the health of all Americans.”

Has authority to address the adverse health effects that can result if toilets are not available.

U.S. Department of Labor

has acted.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

has **NOT** acted.

We want ACTION!

Citizens

↓

Senators and Representatives

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US Department of Health and Human Services

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Restrooms are a Public Health Priority

No new Congressional legislation is needed,
only regulatory compliance with existing mandates.

American Restroom
Association

We call on the government to guarantee to all Americans
-and to our visitors from other countries -
the restroom rights that employees enjoy under OSHA.

We welcome your input on making our Call to Action a success.
Please contact us.

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