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recreation accessibility consultants, llc

APRIL 2013

## [Boston...](#)

As this edition of the RAC e-news was being drafted, the horrible bombing at the Boston Marathon occurred. We here were appalled at the loss of life and injury. For it to happen at a recreation event was equally upsetting. We have friends and family in the Boston area and send our prayers and energy for a speedy return to normalcy.

## [Head Injury Prevention in Soccer](#)

We received a great email question from New Jersey:

*"Has anyone had any experience with helmets for soccer for concussion precautions? I have a 10 year old girl, TBI due to an arrow going into her head in 2010 and wants to get back to playing soccer now but mom is afraid of a concussion and wants a helmet on her... dr said it is probably a good idea. Ideas?"*

In our earlier parks and recreation careers one of us actually dealt with this. Then, 11 years ago, our advice was to acquire wrestling headgear for a young soccer player returning from a car accident, with a similar note from his doctor. But today, there is protective headgear specifically designed for soccer. A look with your search engine for "soccer protective headgear" will identify these soft-sided items. Soccer may be the only sport where head-to-ball contact is a strategic part of the game. So, make this a reasonable modification in your agency soccer programs!

## [Registration Form Problems](#)

A colleague in one of our favorite states emailed us a copy of a

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know that advice from the Department of Justice can be, well, at times, confusing. But some of the ADA requirements are black-and-white.

One of the black-and-white requirements is that a kid with a disability registered for summer camp cannot be charged a fee higher than the fee charged to kids without disabilities. So charging a weekly fee of \$45 to all registrants, and an additional \$80 per week if the kid with a disability needs one-to-one staff, likely busts the ADA requirement.

Another title II requirement prohibits a recreation department from requiring the parents of a kid with a disability to take steps other families don't have to take. So here, this form requires parents to "...notify the program director immediately..." regarding one-to-one supervision needs. Couldn't this be better addressed by a registration form that asks if the registrant needs modifications or supports to enjoy the program? That would prompt a call by staff to the family. **Much** more customer friendly.

Another requirement is staff training. DOJ continues to say that training is implicit in the planning of reasonable modifications. So a form that threatens that staff may "...dismiss...any child whose behavior is disruptive..." likely fails the test that staff need training on how to manage or accommodate behaviors typical of kids with disabilities (and without disabilities!).

The registration form is [here](#). Yours doesn't look anything like this, does it? For help with registration processes and forms, RAC is just a call away at 224/293-6451, or email [john.mcgovern@rac-llc.com](mailto:john.mcgovern@rac-llc.com).

## City of Iowa City Retains RAC for Recreation Facility Access Audits

"We have followed the access requirements for our new construction, but we wanted a look at our existing facilities," said Mike Moran, Director for the City of Iowa City Parks and Recreation Department. "We'd rather spend this now than have to scramble after a complaint is filed, and we liked the NRPA discount," Moran added.

Recreation Accessibility Consultants, LLC has the skill to aid park districts, park and recreation agencies, forest preserve and conservation districts, and special recreation agencies in their endeavors to provide recreation to people.

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facilities. We'll deliver reports before the summer starts.

## The Girl and the Broken Hamburger... and Great Customer Service

One of our staff likes to eat...a lot. Jeff Varchmin, one of our Accessibility Specialists, takes pictures of himself at barbecue joints, a mustard museum, a hole-in-the-wall with great ribs, and more. He forwarded a great story about a young girl with autism. The girl, out dining with her family at a Utah restaurant (Chili's Bar and Grill in Midvale, UT) ordered her favorite food...a hamburger. Chili's policy for kids is to cut the burger in the middle so the diner can determine if it is cooked properly. Long story short, the girl would not eat it...she thought the hamburger was broken!

The waitress could have ignored it. The waitress could have been rude and asked her to leave. Or the waitress could have said "Ohmygosh! I brought you a broken hamburger! I'll go get you a new one!" Which she did and Chili's didn't charge the family.

The whole story is [here](#). Enjoy it, and ask if your staff would have responded as well. Interested in staff training? Reach Shelley Zuniga at [shelley.zuniga@rac-llc.com](mailto:shelley.zuniga@rac-llc.com) or John McGovern at [john.mcgovern@rac-llc.com](mailto:john.mcgovern@rac-llc.com).

## Technology: Smoother than a Hovercraft?

We know that technology is rapidly changing. It isn't just computing, or communication. Professional golfer Bubba Watson has a new type of golf car...a hovercraft. Talk about accessibility! See those stairs? Hmmmmm...I'll just hover on by. The [link](#) to this CBS 2 Chicago online story is excellent!

Are you ready for new means of mobility? Bubba's hovercraft clearly fits within the notion of Other Power Driven Mobility Devices, addressed in both the new title II and title III regulations.

## Some Things Make You Scratch Your Head...

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wrong. But some images just make you scratch your head and wonder how the heck did that happen? Here is one...please, remove any food or beverage from your mouth before viewing!



## Transportation... Two Thoughts!

In a therapeutic recreation listserve, we saw a provocative question about transportation in community based therapeutic recreation programs. We noted that in virtually every survey in every state regarding barriers to recreation for people with disabilities, that transportation is **always** in the top three. People with disabilities simply put, have a hard time getting transportation and using public transportation (that's why the ADA includes title II Subpart B regarding transportation provided by states and local governments).

So providing lift-equipped transportation is a good thing...clearly a smart practice.

That said, it isn't a required practice. Just days after the listserve comment, we received an Illinois agency email asking the following question:

**Question:** "Does a family have a right to transportation to and from a community based therapeutic recreation program? The family registered for a program designed for individuals with

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capacity was full. we got the registrant in IF they provided the transportation to and from the event. The parent called their park district and complained that "the therapeutic recreation agency couldn't provide the transportation that the park district was legally bound to provide."

We don't agree with the family's statement here, even though we generally believe community therapeutic recreation programs do need transportation to succeed. Unlike public schools, where transportation can be identified as a related service for students with disabilities (that means it is necessary to assure the student makes and retains academic gains), transportation to parks and recreation or therapeutic recreation programs is **not** mandated. It **is** permitted of course, and is often provided as a best practice. But it is not a required service.

## Shelley Says...

RAC Senior Project Manager Shelley Zuniga writes about a question we get on a regular basis from past clients, current clients, and interested parks and recreation agencies. This month, the topic is accessible benches and picnic tables.

### ***BENCHES, TABLES, AND ACCESS - OH MY!***

It's getting to be that time of year! The days are longer and the sun is shining brighter. This means patrons will come out of dormancy for picnicking and relaxing in parks. Making sure benches and picnic tables are accessible to all visitors is crucial to a great experience at parks. But what exactly does an accessible bench or picnic table mean?

The 2010 Standards do not address benches or picnic tables, but guidance in the 2009 Draft Final Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas helps. The recommendation is at least 20% of ***benches and picnic tables*** throughout a park are of an accessible design.

For accessible benches, locate them on a level (slope not greater than 2.08%), firm and stable surface that is connected to the accessible route. This surface should also include an adjacent "parking space" at least 36" by 48" provided next to the bench. We recommend smart practices that are not in the draft guidelines, such as a seat height between 17" and 19"

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support that extends the full length of the seat. Smart practices, while not a requirement, make amenities more usable.

Similarly, the guidelines describe an accessible **picnic table** as having 30" wide knee clearance of at least 27" off and minimum of 9" deep as well as toe clearance at least 9" high and a minimum of 17" deep. The accessible tables should be placed on a firm and stable surface with slopes no greater than 2.08% in any direction, and have a 36" route around the table and connected to the accessible route.

Accessible benches and picnic tables are readily available on the market. When buying and installing, we urge you to think access! Making benches and picnic tables accessible is an excellent way to ensure all visitors get to enjoy this (soon-to-be) great weather!!

## Parks and Recreation Operating Ratio and Geographic Information System (PRORAGIS)

Wouldn't it be great to have better metrics about how many parks have a playground, and how many pools there are in the US, and how many soccer fields there are as opposed to baseball fields? Well, we can get that, and much more. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) initiated PRORAGIS several years ago to help agencies answer questions like "How do we compare to other communities that are the same size?", and "What's the average budget for departments in communities our size?".

The only way to get this information is for you, the reader, to go to this NRPA link and enter data in the PRORAGIS system. NRPA cleverly created a PRORAGIS-lite to induce you to the site, and introduce you to the benefits.

Don't wait... go to: <http://www.nrpa.org/PRORAGIS/>

### **Disclaimer**

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*with Disabilities Act to public parks and recreation. Readers interested in legal advice should seek an attorney licensed in your state that knows the ADA and can apply it to parks and recreation.*

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For a proposal or further information, contact the industry's leading professional:  
[john.mcGovern@rac-llc.com](mailto:john.mcGovern@rac-llc.com)

2675 Pratum Avenue  
Hoffman Estates, IL 60192  
Phone: 224-293-6450  
Fax: 224-293-6455  
Website: [RAC-llc.com](http://RAC-llc.com)

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