



## ARA Board of Directors' Policy Recommendations for the Future of Public Restrooms

May 2020

*ARA's motto: Clean, safe, and well-designed public restrooms*

Well before the advent of COVID-19, and today's concerns relative to the re-opening of the country, the American Restroom Association advocated for the availability of clean, safe, and well-designed public restrooms. For nearly 20 years, we've documented the need for evolved restroom design and technology, enhanced restroom availability and accessibility, the improvement of school facilities, and the evolution of pertinent legislation and regulations. We've also championed support and changes to alleviate the problems faced by people who avoid activities because proper toilet facilities are not available especially those with social phobias and special needs. The recommendations below encompass those areas of focus and the enhanced requirements brought on by the coronavirus. We recommend:

### Gender neutral, single toilet, fully enclosed stalls

- Currently found in many European countries and known as WCs ("water closets")
- Uses a design now approved in the International Plumbing Code (IPC)
- Should require a cover on the toilet
- Sink areas should be separate, with at least two per public restroom area, properly spaced

**Benefits:** Enhances social distancing; minimizes transfer of aerosolized water particles potentially containing coronavirus.

**Note:** While the ARA prefers this design for all public restrooms, we acknowledge that, in the absence of new construction or renovation, there will still be "gang" toilets for the foreseeable future.

### Urinal Spacing/Dividers for Men's Public Restrooms

- For existing facilities, block off every other urinal if there are two or more.

- For existing facilities with a current design that has no dividers, they should be installed or there should be *two* urinals blocked off for every one open.
- For new construction, the IPC (at the behest of the ARA), now requires dividers between urinals

**Benefits:** enhances social distancing and coronavirus transmission

## Recommended Fixtures for New Construction and Renovations

- Sensor-activated water taps
- Restroom door opening devices to eliminate the need to touch door handles, such as foot “pedals” to open doors or automated door mechanisms
- Restroom designs that eliminate the need for doors
- Toilet seat lids (potentially mechanically activated to eliminate the need for touching)
- Waterless urinals to eliminate splash back
- Blade hand dryers or single-paper, motion-activated towel dispensers
- Hand sanitizers
- Anti-microbial surfaces (e.g. copper)
- Frequent cleaning and monitoring
- Where possible, more toilets to eliminate restroom queuing (short-term solution: implementation of portable toilets)

The ARA recognizes, and encourages, the nation’s businesses, municipalities, and schools to place a new focus on increased safety and reduced disease transmission over the costs of these changes.

## For More Information

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*The American Restroom Association also recognizes the following organizations that have our common focus areas and/or are part of the ARA Board .*

### **World Health Organization's (WHO) position:**

- WHO acknowledges shortcomings of conventional public toilet design
- Infection control must become priority in toilet design/redesign, e.g. visible hygiene improvements like hand sanitizers

### **PHLUSH – (Public Hygiene Let's Us Stay Human) –**

- <https://www.phlush.org/> - Carol McCreary
- Public Toilet Advocacy Toolkit - [https://www.phlush.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/TOOLKIT\\_all\\_11.9.pdf](https://www.phlush.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/TOOLKIT_all_11.9.pdf)
- Portland Loo - <https://portlandloo.com/>

### **Project CLEAN (Citizens, Learners, and Educators Against Neglect) in Public Schools**

- <http://projectclean.us/> - Tom Keating
- Publications - <http://projectclean.us/publications.php>
- Videos - <http://projectclean.us/videos.php>

### **Simon Foundation for Contenance**

- <https://simonfoundation.org/> - Cheryl Gartley
- Bladder and Bowel Health - <https://simonfoundation.org/bladder-and-bowel-health/>
- Resources - <https://simonfoundation.org/resources/>

### **World Toilet Organization**

- <https://worldtoilet.org/> - Jack Sim

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## Additional References

### *COVID-19 Feces Transmission*

CDC (April 23, 2020):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

Science Daily (May 14, 2020):

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/05/200514131710.htm>

Nature (March 25, 2020)

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41575-020-0295-7>

National Center for Biotechnology Information

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7095230/>

MedPage Today (March 9, 2020)

<https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/covid19/85315>

### *Toilet Plume*

CDC (March 2013):

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nioshtic-2/20042357.html>

USA Today (May 15, 2020):

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2020/05/15/coronavirus-transmission-flush-lid-down-prevent-toilet-plumes/5198015002/>