

---

## Section 5

---

### SANITARY ACCOMMODATION IN BUILDINGS OTHER THAN DWELLINGS

#### Objectives

**5.1** In principle, suitable sanitary accommodation should be available to everybody, including sanitary accommodation designed for wheelchair users, ambulant disabled people, people of either sex with babies and small children, or people encumbered by luggage.

**5.2** In multi-storey buildings, the consistent location of toilets on each floor can help people with learning difficulties to locate these facilities easily.

#### Sanitary accommodation generally

##### Design considerations

**5.3** A number of issues need to be considered in connection with all forms of sanitary accommodation. These relate to the needs of people with visual or hearing impairments, people with learning difficulties and people whose lack of tactile sensitivity can cause them to be injured by touching hot surfaces. Taps and WC cubicle doors should be operable by people with limited strength or manual dexterity and doors to cubicles should be capable of being opened if a person has collapsed against them while inside the cubicle. Preferably, all doors to WC cubicles and wheelchair-accessible unisex toilets open out or, if they open in, the door swing should not encroach into the wheelchair turning space or minimum activity space. Where possible, light switches with large push pads should be used in preference to pull cords (see 4.28).

##### Provisions

**5.4** Sanitary accommodation will satisfy Requirement M1 or M3 if:

- a. any bath or wash basin tap is either controlled automatically, or is capable of being operated using a closed fist, e.g. by lever action;
- b. terminal fittings comply with Guidance Note G18.5 of the Guidance Document relating to Schedule 2: Requirements for Water Fittings, of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, SI 1999/1148;
- c. door handles and other ironmongery comply with provisions 3.10(d) and (e) of 'Internal doors';
- d. WC compartment doors, and doors to wheelchair-accessible unisex toilets, changing rooms or shower rooms are fitted with light action privacy bolts so that they can be operated by people with limited dexterity and, if required to self-close, can be opened using a force no greater than 20N;
- e. WC compartment doors, and doors to wheelchair-accessible unisex toilets, changing rooms or shower rooms have an emergency release mechanism so that they are capable of being opened outwards, from the outside, in case of emergency;
- f. doors, when open, do not obstruct emergency escape routes;
- g. any fire alarm emits a visual and audible signal to warn occupants with hearing or visual impairments;
- h. any emergency assistance alarm system has:
  - i) visual and audible indicators to confirm that an emergency call has been received;
  - ii) a reset control reachable from a wheelchair and the WC, or from the wheelchair and the shower/changing seat;
  - iii) a signal that is distinguishable visually and audibly from the fire alarm.

- i. any lighting controls comply with the provisions for 'Switches and controls', see 4.30;
- j. any heat emitters are either screened or have their exposed surfaces kept at a temperature below 43°C;
- k. the surface finish of sanitary fittings and grab bars contrasts visually with background wall and floor finishes, and there is also visual contrast between wall and floor finishes.

## Provision of toilet accommodation

### Design considerations

**5.5** Toilet accommodation needs to be suitable, not only for disabled people, but for all people who use the building. For disabled people, suitable toilet accommodation may take the form of a specially designed cubicle in separate-sex toilet washrooms, or a self-contained unisex toilet. For wheelchair users in particular, a self-contained unisex toilet is always the preferred option since, if necessary, a partner or carer of a different sex can enter to give assistance. Wheelchair-accessible unisex toilets should always be provided in addition to any wheelchair-accessible accommodation in separate-sex toilet washrooms. Wheelchair-accessible unisex toilets should not be used for baby changing.

**5.6** The provision of an enlarged cubicle in a separate-sex toilet washroom can be of benefit to ambulant disabled people, as well as parents with children, and people (e.g. those with luggage) who need an enlarged space. In large building developments, separate facilities for baby changing and an enlarged unisex toilet incorporating an adult changing table are desirable.

**Note:** For specific guidance on the provision of sanitary accommodation in sports buildings, refer to 'Access for Disabled People'.

### Provisions

**5.7** The provision of toilet accommodation will satisfy Requirement M1 or M3 if:

- a. where there is space for only one toilet in a building, it is of a wheelchair-accessible unisex type, but of greater width to accommodate a standing height wash basin;
- b. at least one wheelchair-accessible unisex toilet is provided at each location in a building where sanitary facilities are provided for use by customers and visitors to a building, or by people working in the building;
- c. at least one WC cubicle is provided in separate-sex toilet accommodation for use by ambulant disabled people;
- d. where there are 4 or more WC cubicles in separate-sex toilet accommodation, one of these is an enlarged cubicle for use by people who need extra space, in addition to any provision under 5.7(c).

### Wheelchair-accessible unisex toilets

#### Design considerations

**5.8** Wheelchair users should be able to approach, transfer to, and use the sanitary facilities provided within a building. This requires the provision of a wheelchair-accessible unisex toilet. The relationship of the WC to the finger rinse basin and other accessories should allow a person to wash and dry hands while seated on the WC. The space provided for manoeuvring, should enable wheelchair users to adopt various transfer techniques that allow independent or assisted use. It is important that the transfer space alongside the WC is kept clear to the back wall. When transferring to and from their wheelchair, some people need horizontal support rails. The rail on the open side is a drop-down rail, but on the wall side, it can be a wall-mounted grab rail (which is thought to give a more rigid handhold) set at a greater distance than normal from the wall or, alternatively, a second drop-

down rail in addition to the wall-mounted grab rail where the grab rail is spaced at the minimum distance from the wall and therefore does not give the same degree of support.

**5.9** A unisex toilet is approached separately from other sanitary accommodation. It is more easily identified than a wheelchair-accessible cubicle in a separate-sex toilet washroom and, provided it is used only by disabled people, it is more likely to be available when required. This is particularly important as some disabled people need to use a toilet more frequently than other users. The time needed to reach a wheelchair-accessible toilet should therefore be kept to a minimum when considering the location of unisex toilet accommodation. In addition, a unisex toilet enables one or two assistants of either sex to assist a disabled person. Consideration should be given to installing a chemical sanitary waste disposal unit in wheelchair-accessible WC accommodation. Some wheelchair users find it difficult to use a standard-height WC seat and, for them, it is important that the WC pan can accept a variable height toilet seat riser. WC pans manufactured to the key dimensions given in BS 5503-3 and BS 5504-4 are considered acceptable.

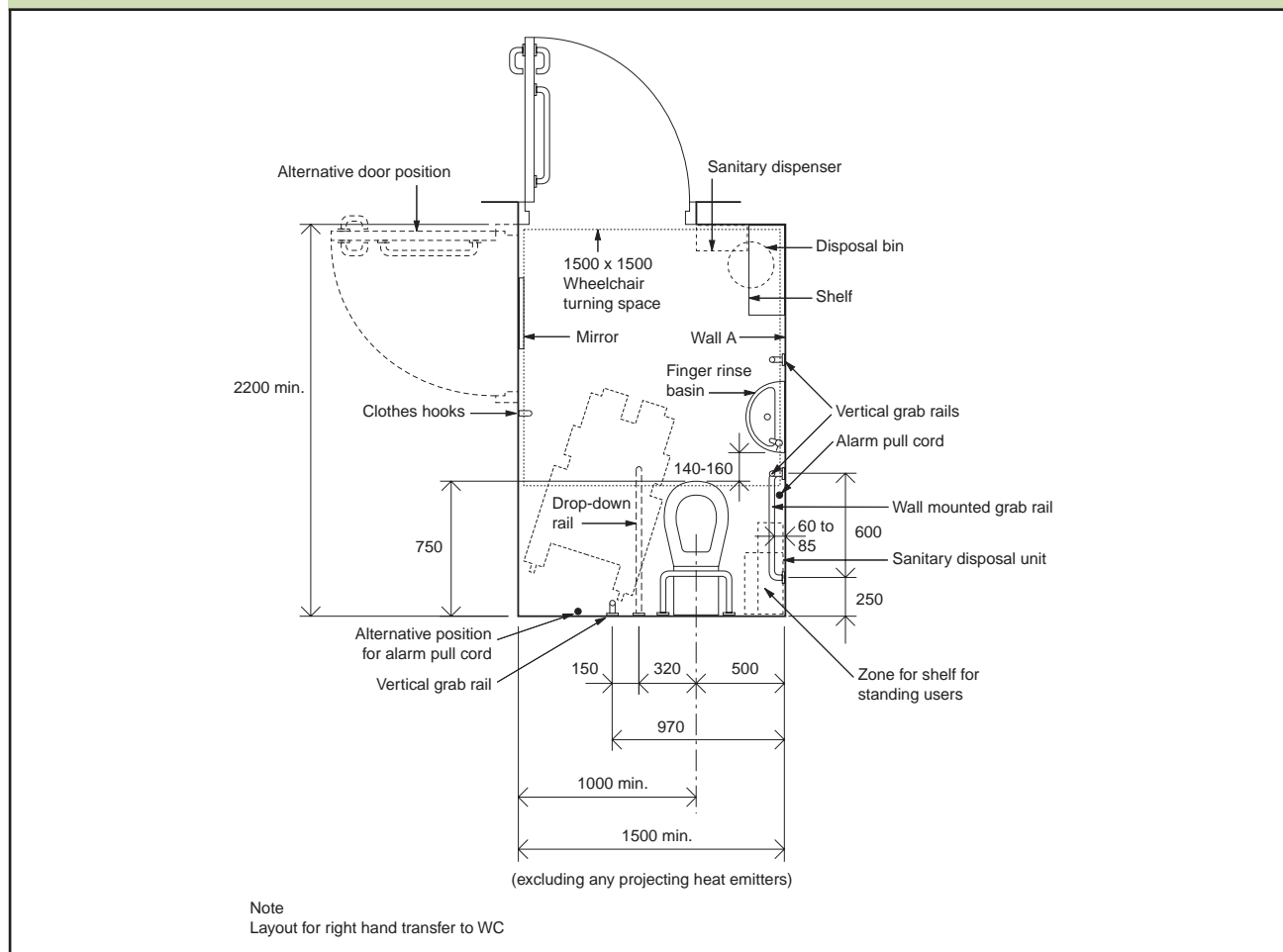
**Note:** More detailed guidance on the various techniques used to transfer from a wheelchair to a WC, as well as appropriate sanitary and other fittings is given in BS 8300.

### Provisions

**5.10** Wheelchair-accessible unisex toilets will satisfy Requirement M1 or M3 if:

- a. one is located as close as possible to the entrance and/or waiting area of the building;
- b. they are not located in a way that compromises the privacy of users;
- c. they are located in a similar position on each floor of a multi-storey building, and allow for right- and left-hand transfer on alternate floors;
- d. when more than one unisex toilet is available in other than multi-storey buildings, a choice of layouts suitable for left-hand and right-hand transfer is provided;
- e. when it is the only toilet facility in the building, the width is increased from 1.5m to 2m and it includes a standing height wash basin, in addition to the finger rinse basin associated with the WC;
- f. they are located on accessible routes that are direct and obstruction-free;
- g. doors are preferably outward-opening and are fitted with a horizontal closing bar fixed to the inside face;
- h. any wheelchair user does not have to travel:
  - i) more than 40m on the same floor, unless a greater distance can be argued in the Access Statement on the grounds that the circulation route is unobstructed, e.g. by the installation of doors with hold-open devices;
  - ii) more than a 40m combined horizontal distance where the unisex toilet accommodation is on another floor of the building, but is accessible by passenger lift (if a lifting platform is installed, vertical travel to a unisex toilet is limited to one storey);
- i. the minimum overall dimensions of, and the arrangement of fittings within, a wheelchair-accessible unisex toilet, comply with Diagram 18;
- j. where the horizontal support rail on the wall adjacent to the WC is set with the minimum spacing from the wall, an additional drop-down rail is provided on the wall side at a distance of 320mm from the centre line of the WC;
- k. where the horizontal support rail on the wall adjacent to the WC is set so that its centre line is 400mm from

Diagram 18 Unisex wheelchair-accessible toilet with corner WC



the centre line of the WC, there is no additional drop-down rail;

l. the heights and arrangement of fittings in a wheelchair-accessible unisex toilet comply with Diagram 19 and, as appropriate, Diagram 20;

m. an emergency assistance alarm system is provided, complying with 5.4;

n. the emergency assistance call signal outside the toilet compartment is located so that it can be easily seen and heard by those able to give assistance;

o. an emergency assistance pull cord is easily identifiable (see 4.30(e)) and reachable from the WC and from the floor close to the WC;

p. any heat emitters are located so that they do not restrict the minimum clear wheelchair manoeuvring space, nor the space beside the WC used for transfer from the wheelchair to the WC;

q. WC pans conform to BS 5503-3 or BS 5504-4 in terms of key dimensions in order to accommodate the use of a variable height toilet seat riser (see 5.9);

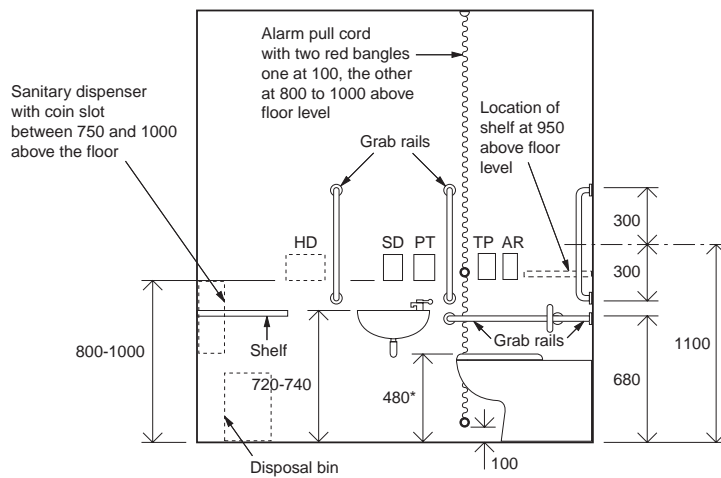
r. cisterns for WCs that will be used by wheelchair users have their flushing mechanism positioned on the open or transfer side of the space, irrespective of handing.

### Toilets in separate-sex washrooms

#### Design considerations

**5.11** Ambulant disabled people should have the opportunity to use a WC compartment within any separate-sex toilet washroom. The compartment should be fitted with support rails, and include a minimum activity space to accommodate people who use crutches, or otherwise have impaired leg movements. The presence of this

Diagram 19 Heights and arrangement of fittings in a unisex wheelchair-accessible toilet (looking towards wall A in Diagram 18)

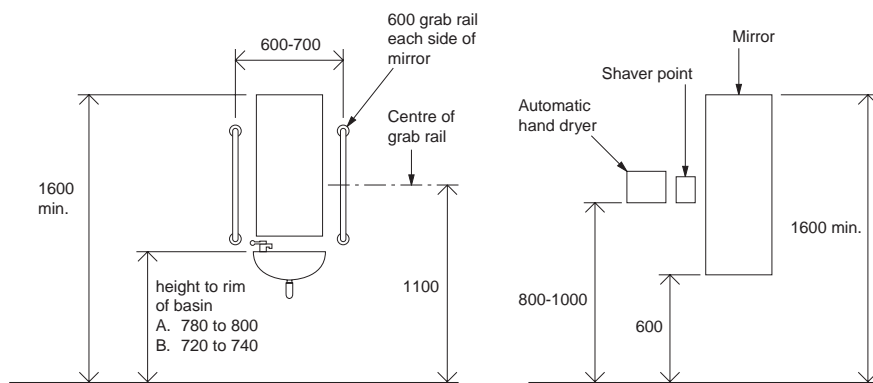


\*Height subject to manufacturing tolerance of WC pan

- HD: Possible position for automatic hand dryer (see also Diag 21)
- SD: Soap dispenser
- PT: Paper towel dispenser
- AR: Alarm reset button
- TP: Toilet paper dispenser

Height of drop-down rails to be the same as the other horizontal grab rails

Diagram 20 Heights of various fittings in toilet accommodation



Height of independent wash basin and location of associated fittings, for wheelchair users and standing people

- A. For people standing
- B. For use from WC

Mirror located away from wash basin suitable for seated and standing people (Mirror and associated fittings used within a WC compartment or serving a range of compartments)

facility helps avoid unnecessary travel to unisex toilet accommodation. Some ambulant disabled people find it difficult to use a standard-height WC seat and, for them, it is important that the WC pan can accept a variable height toilet seat riser.

**5.12 Separate-sex toilet washrooms** above a certain size should also include an enlarged WC cubicle for use by people who need extra space, e.g. parents with children and babies, people carrying luggage and also ambulant disabled people.

Consideration should be given to installing a fold-down table, e.g. for baby-changing. Standard WC compartments should also have a minimum manoeuvring space clear of any door swing.

**5.13** Where a separate-sex toilet washroom can be accessed by wheelchair users, it should be possible for them to use both a urinal, where appropriate, and a washbasin at a lower height than is provided for other users. The relative numbers of urinals for men and WC compartments for women has been the subject of recent research. In general, the findings indicate that there should be at least the same number of WCs (for women) as urinals (for men) and for some buildings types, e.g. large retail buildings, at least twice as many. Consideration should be given to providing a low level urinal for children in male washrooms.

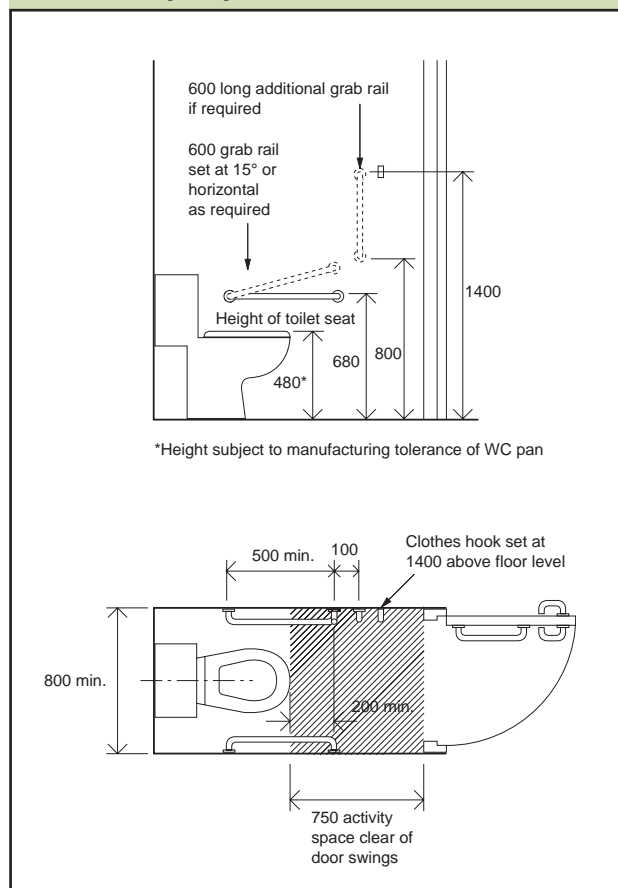
**Note:** More detailed guidance on appropriate sanitary and other fittings is given in BS 8300.

### Provisions

**5.14** WC compartments within separate-sex toilet washrooms will satisfy Requirement M1 or M3 if:

- a. the swing of any inward opening doors to standard WC compartments is such that a 450mm diameter manoeuvring space is maintained between the swing of the door, the WC pan and the side wall of the compartment;
- b. the minimum dimensions of compartments for ambulant disabled people, including the activity space, and the arrangement of grab bars and other fittings within the compartment, comply with Diagram 21;
- c. doors to compartments for ambulant disabled people are preferably outward-opening and are fitted with a horizontal closing bar fixed to the inside face;
- d. an enlarged compartment for those who need extra space (based on the compartment for ambulant disabled

**Diagram 21 WC cubicle for ambulant disabled people**



people) is 1200mm wide and includes a horizontal grab bar adjacent to the WC, a vertical grab bar on the rear wall and space for a shelf and fold-down changing table;

- e. any compartment for use by ambulant disabled people has a WC pan that conforms to BS 5503-3 or BS 5504-4 in terms of key dimensions, in order to accommodate the use of a variable height toilet seat riser (see 5.9 and 5.11);
- f. a wheelchair-accessible compartment (where provided) has the same layout and fittings as the unisex toilet;
- g. any wheelchair-accessible washroom has at least one washbasin with its rim set at 720 to 740mm above the floor and, for men, at least one urinal with its rim set at 380mm above the floor, with two 600mm long vertical grab bars with their centre lines at 1100mm above the floor, positioned either side of the urinal.

### Wheelchair-accessible changing and shower facilities

#### Design considerations

**5.15** A choice of shower layout combined with the correct location of shower controls and fittings will allow disabled people to use the facilities independently or be assisted by others when necessary. For guidance on the provision of en-suite shower facilities associated with hotel bedrooms, see 4.19.

**5.16** In buildings where changing facilities are associated with showering facilities, many disabled people will be content to use changing and shower areas that are open but provided with subdivisions, whereas some will require the privacy and convenience of an individual self-contained cubicle or compartment. The dimensions of the self-contained compartment allow space for a helper. Any combined facility should be divided into distinct 'wet' and 'dry' areas. In open changing and shower areas, it may be difficult to provide a configuration of handrails, controls and seat suitable for all disabled people to use. Individual self-contained accommodation is therefore preferred although, if it contains a WC, it should not be the only wheelchair-accessible toilet accommodation.

**5.17** In the case of individual changing rooms not associated with showering, e.g. in clothes shops, the dimensions and fittings recommended for an individual self-contained changing cubicle in a sports building should be provided. In large building complexes, such as retail parks and large sports centres, there should be one wheelchair-accessible unisex toilet capable of including an adult changing table.

**Note 1:** For sports buildings, details of different types of changing and shower facilities are given in 'Access for Disabled People'.

**Note 2:** More detailed guidance on appropriate sanitary and other fittings is given in BS 8300.

#### Provisions

**5.18** Wheelchair-accessible changing and shower facilities will satisfy Requirement M1 or M3 if:

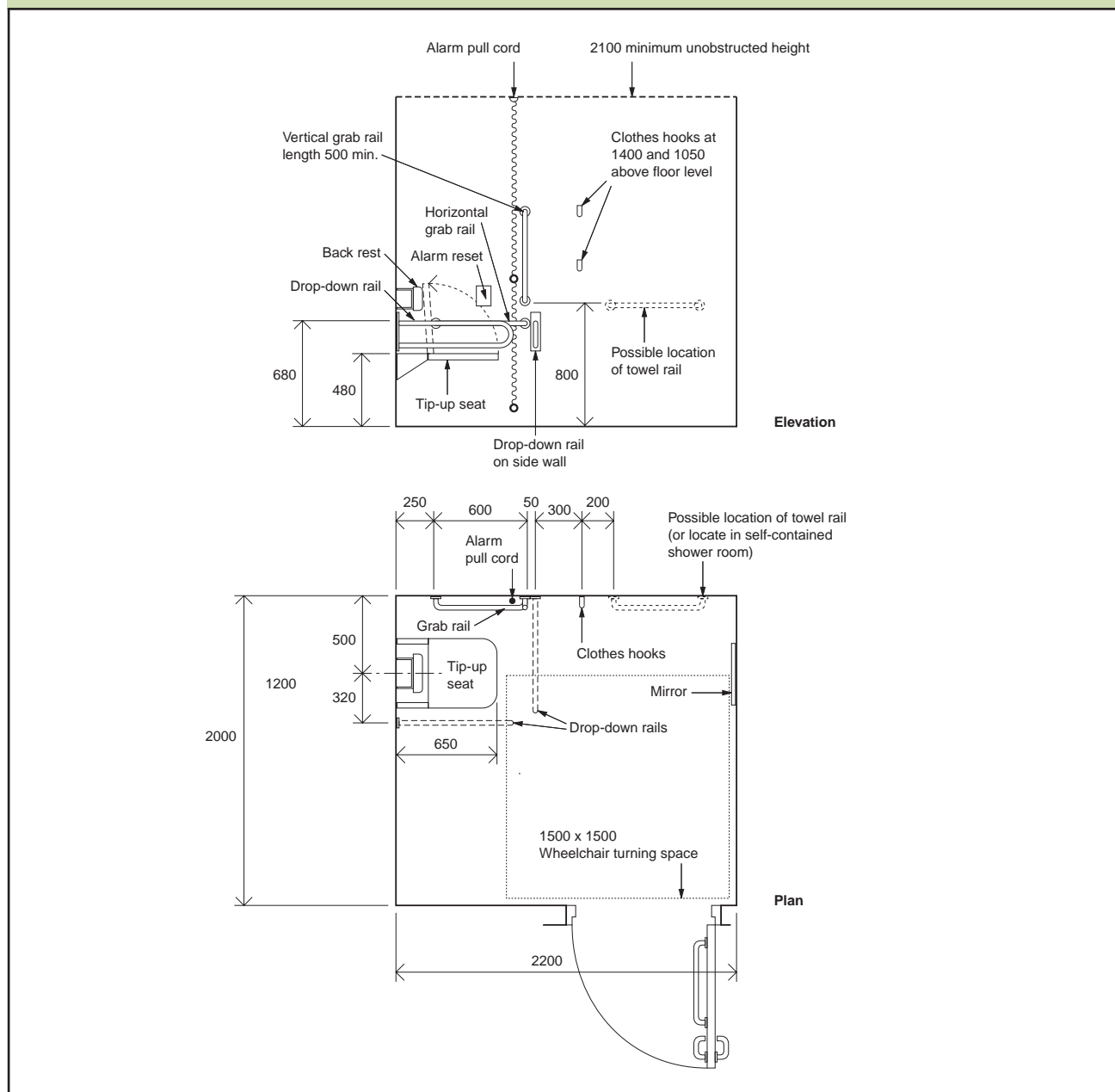
*For changing and shower facilities*

- a. a choice of layouts suitable for left-hand and right-hand transfer is provided when more than one individual changing compartment or shower compartment is available;
- b. they are provided with wall mounted drop-down support rails and wall mounted slip-resistant tip-up seats (not spring-loaded);
- c. in communal shower facilities and changing facilities, they are provided with subdivisions that have the same configuration of space and equipment as for self-contained facilities but without doors;
- d. in sports facilities, individual self-contained shower facilities and changing facilities are available in addition to communal separate-sex facilities;
- e. an emergency assistance pull cord, complying with 4.30(e), is easily identifiable and reachable from the wall mounted tip-up seat, or from the floor;
- f. an emergency assistance alarm system complying with 5.4(h) is provided;
- g. facilities for limb storage are included for the benefit of amputees;

*For changing facilities*

- h. the minimum overall dimensions of, and the arrangement of equipment and controls within, individual self-contained changing facilities comply with Diagram 22;
- i. when associated with shower facilities, the floor of a changing area is level and slip resistant when dry or when wet;
- j. there is a manoeuvring space 1500mm deep in front of lockers in self-contained or communal changing areas;

Diagram 22 An example of a self-contained changing room for individual use



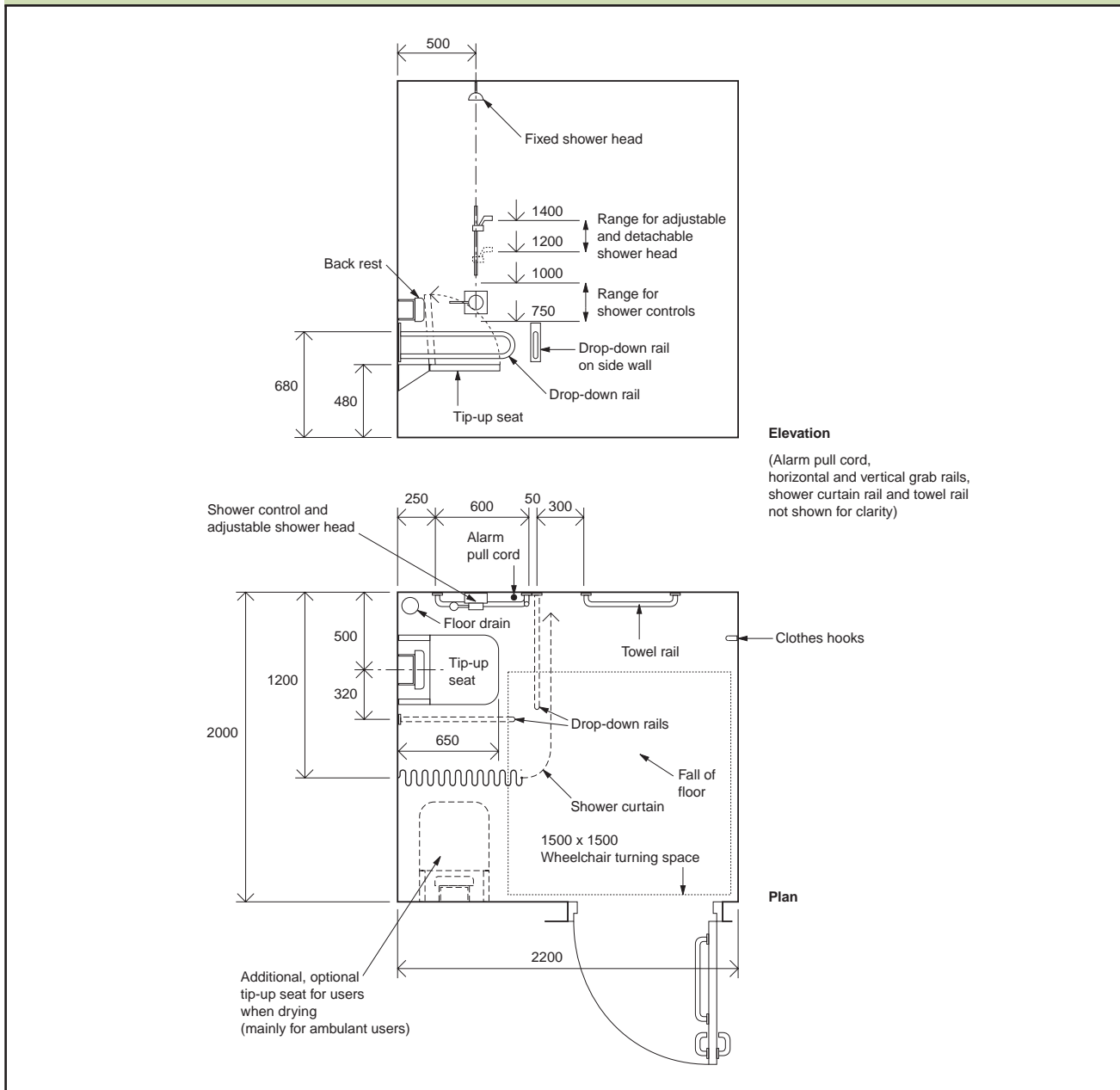
*For shower facilities*

- k. individual self-contained shower facilities comply with Diagram 23;
- l. where showers are provided in commercial developments for the benefit of staff, at least one wheelchair-accessible shower compartment complying with Diagram 23 should be provided;
- m. a shower curtain, which encloses the seat and the rails when they are in a horizontal position, can be operated from the shower seat;

- n. a shelf that can be reached from the shower seat or from the wheelchair, before or after transfer, is provided for toiletries;
- o. the floor of the shower and shower area is slip resistant and self-draining;
- p. a shower terminal fitting complies with Guidance Note G18.5 of the Guidance Document relating to Schedule 2: Requirement for Water Fittings, of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, SI 1999/1148, and the markings on the shower control are logical and clear;



Diagram 23 An example of a self-contained shower room for individual use



q. where wheelchair-accessible shower facilities are available in communal areas, shower controls are positioned between 750 and 1000mm above the floor;

*For shower facilities incorporating a WC*

r. the minimum overall dimensions of, and the arrangement of fittings within, an individual self-contained shower area incorporating a corner WC, e.g. in a sports building, comply with Diagram 24;

s. a choice of left-hand and right-hand transfer layouts is available when

more than one shower area incorporating a corner WC is provided.

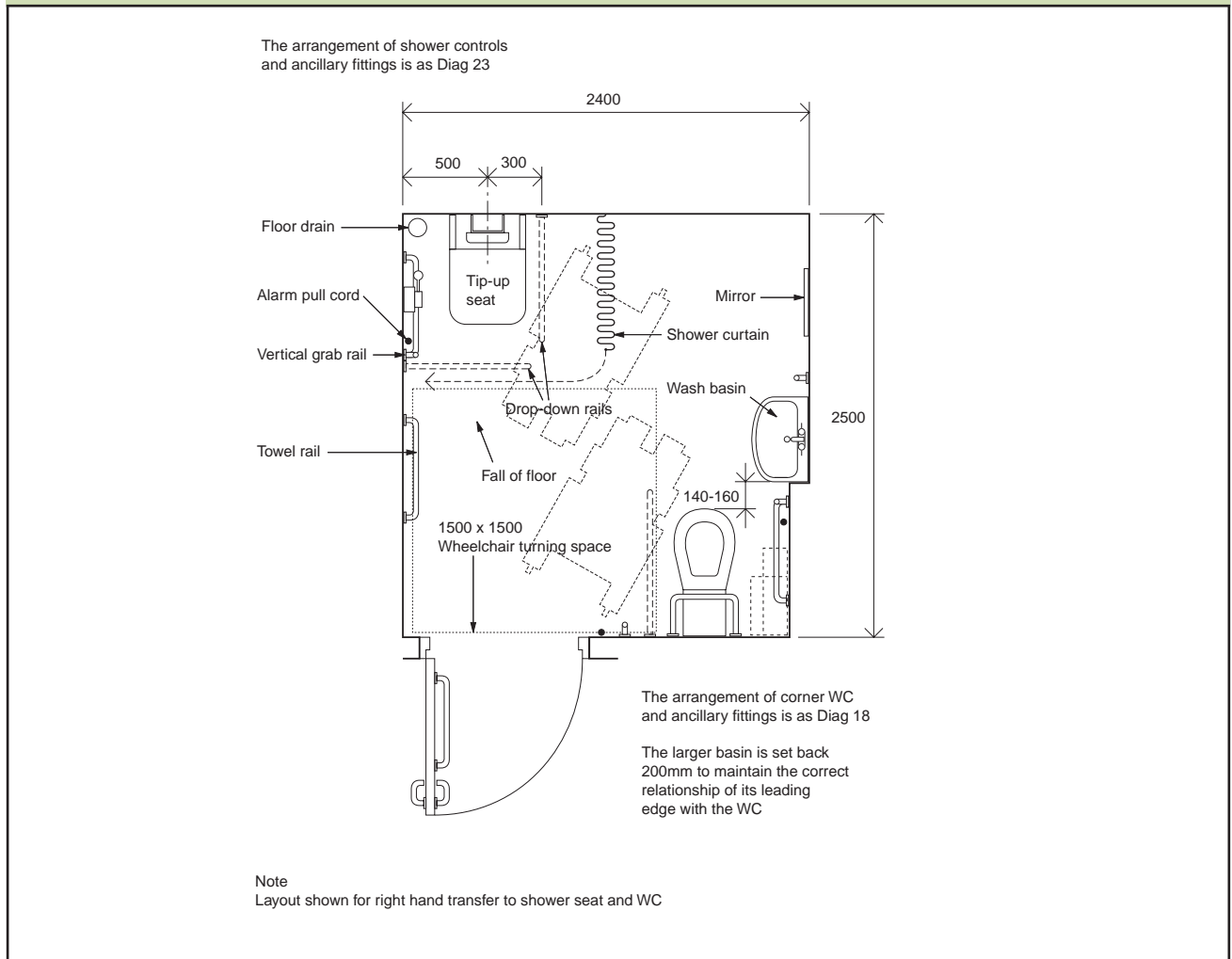
**Note:** Guidance prepared by the Health and Safety Executive on the slip resistance of floor surfaces is given in Annex C of BS 8300.

## Wheelchair-accessible bathrooms

### Design considerations

**5.19** Wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people should be able to wash or bathe either independently or with assistance from others. The relationship of the bath to other sanitary fittings, and to the space

Diagram 24 An example of a shower room incorporating a corner WC for individual use



required for manoeuvring, is therefore critical. Providing a choice of bathroom layout, wherever possible, will meet the needs of many disabled people and help maintain their independence.

**5.20** The guidance covered here applies to wheelchair-accessible bathing facilities where provided in buildings such as hotels, motels, relatives' accommodation in hospitals, and to student accommodation and sports facilities where baths are provided as an alternative, or as a supplement, to showers. For guidance on the provision of en-suite bathrooms associated with hotel bedrooms, see 4.19.

**Note:** More detailed guidance on appropriate sanitary and other fittings, including facilities for the use of mobile and fixed hoists is given in BS 8300.

## Provisions

**5.21** Wheelchair-accessible bathrooms will satisfy Requirement M1 or M3 if:

- the minimum overall dimensions of, and the arrangement of fittings within, a bathroom for individual use incorporating a corner WC comply with Diagrams 25 and 26;
- a choice of layouts suitable for left-hand and right-hand transfer is provided when more than one bathroom for individual use incorporating a corner WC is available;
- the floor of a bathroom is slip resistant when dry or when wet;
- the bath is provided with a transfer seat, 400mm deep and equal to the width of the bath;

- e. doors are preferably outward-opening and are fitted with a horizontal closing bar fixed to the inside face;
- f. an emergency assistance pull-cord complying with 4.30(e) is easily identifiable and reachable from the bath or from the floor;
- g. an emergency assistance alarm system complying with 5.4(h) is provided.

**Note:** Guidance prepared by the Health and Safety Executive on the slip resistance of floor surfaces is given in Annex C of BS 8300.

Diagram 25 An example of a bathroom incorporating a corner WC

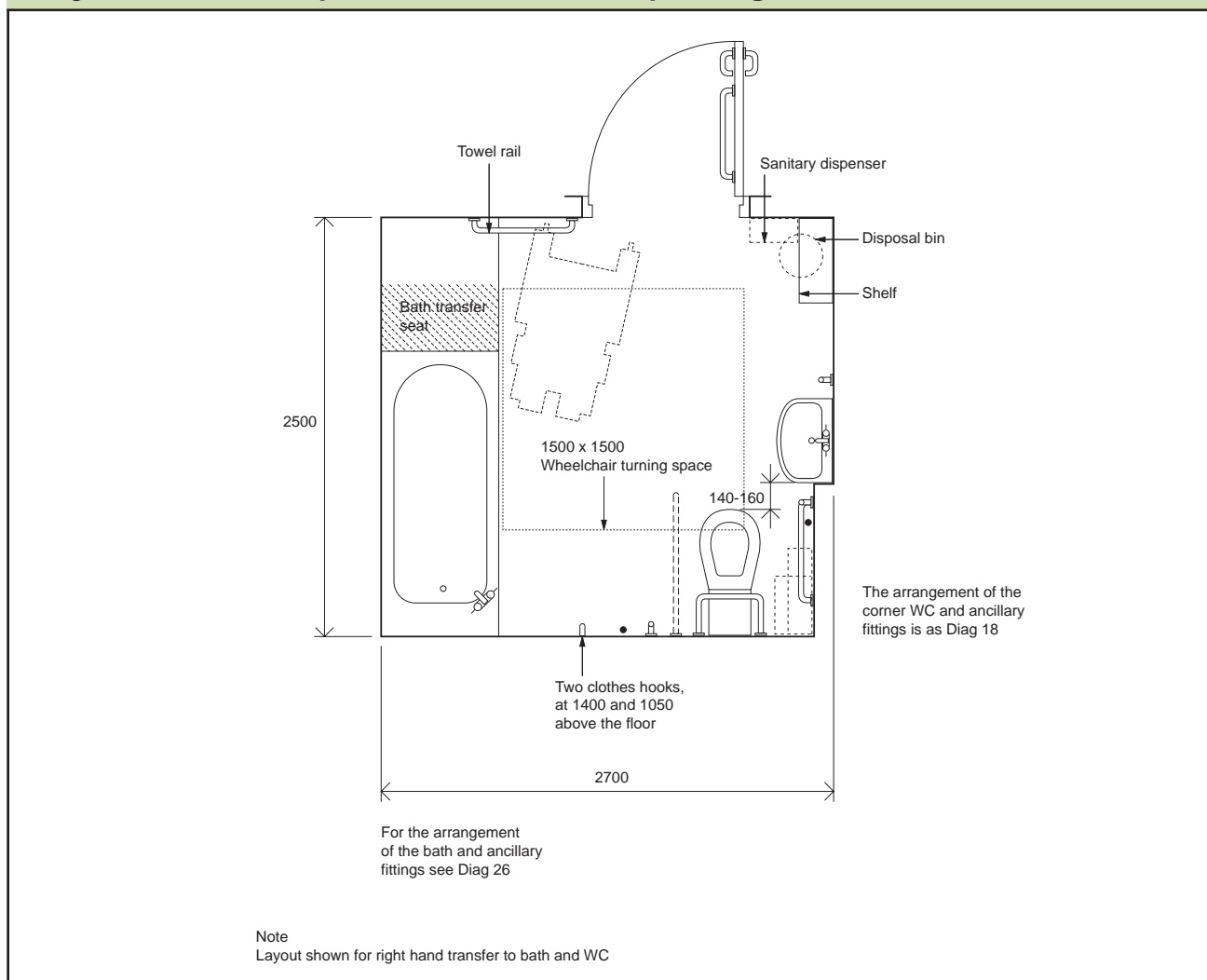


Diagram 26 Grab rails and fittings associated with a bath

