

BATHROOM: LEVEL ACCESS SHOWER (Wet Area Shower), TOILET AND VANITY Information Sheet for EMS Assessors

The following information provides design/technical points, relevant aspects of Ministry of Health EMS funding and clinical considerations to think about during the assessment and modification process.

The EMS Assessor's role is to ensure that the person, family/whanau and caregivers are fully informed. This can be done by either providing the information yourself, or by directing the equipment supplier and/or List Contractor/Builder to assist with technical or installation details.

Design/Technical Points

Level Access Shower:

1. Has a sloped floor area of a minimum of 1200mm x 1200mm square for a person needing to shower sitting down. The shower curtain is usually 100 - 200mm inside the perimeter of the sloped area and it should be weighted to make contact with the shower floor.
2. Is constructed with waterproof wall linings, a thick slip-resistant vinyl floor covering and has a hand held shower rose on a sliding rail.
3. The entire bathroom floor is level with the shower floor which slopes 4 ways into a floor drain within the centre of the shower area – part of the requirement of the minimum floor area size relates to having sufficient slope to allow sufficient water drainage.
4. A building consent is needed for a level access shower and the cost of this will be included in the total cost of the modification
5. The position of the level access shower also has to take into account the water spray / splash:
 - Windows; if an existing window comes within the level access shower area, Council regulations will require it to be waterproofed and safety glazed., this cost will need to be included. The shower curtain track and curtain may need to extend across the window which will affect mixer and rail placement on this wall.
 - Doorways; should not be too near or within the level access shower area, because the door frame is unable to be made watertight. There should be at least a 60mm gap between the door jamb and shower curtain to prevent water spray issues. In some circumstances a 'nib wall' (safety glass) may be installed as well as the curtain to protect



the door frame

- The shower head spray should not face towards a door
 - Electrical appliances must be 1 metre away from the shower.
6. Council regulations require a 'temperature reducing value' to be fitted with all shower modifications. If there is an older style hot water cylinder, the water pressure from the new hand held shower may be reduced.

Note: If the hot water cylinder is old and is of a low pressure type, attempting to increase the hot water pressure may cause the hot water cylinder to leak. The person/home owner needs to be aware to check the hot water cylinder for leaks from time to time. If it needs to be replaced the cost of this will be the home owner's responsibility to allow the modification to take place.

Toilet:

7. Generally the standard dimensions related to a domestic toilet are:
- 450mm from the side wall to the centre of the toilet
 - 750mm from the rear wall to the centre of the toilet for a wall mounted cistern
 - 460mm height from the floor
 - Reference Department of Building and Housing: Compliance Document for New Zealand Building Code Clause G1 Personal Hygiene – 2nd Edition 4.2.2

Vanity:

8. Generally the standard dimensions related to a domestic vanity are:
- 400mm from the rear wall to the centre of the basin
 - 900mm is the standard height for an ambulant user
 - Reference Department of Building and Housing: Compliance Document for New Zealand Building Code Clause G1 Personal Hygiene – 2nd Edition 4.2.2

Care, Use and Maintenance

1. A level access shower is a permanent fixture, and becomes the home owner's property.
2. All repairs, maintenance, replacement or removal of the level access shower becomes the responsibility of the home owner.
3. Day to day, cleaning, care and maintenance is the responsibility of the person. The level access shower will require regular cleaning. The following is the manufacturers recommended cleaning method to ensure the slip resistant properties of the vinyl are



retained:

- sweep and/or vacuum dust and other debris
- use an appropriate detergent that has PH of about 10 and doesn't contain pine oil
- never mix detergents
- as required, scrub with a hard bristle brush but never use a scouring pad.
- mop off residue
- thoroughly rinse with hot, clean water
- allow to dry

When Considering modifications to the bathroom think about:

Level Access Shower:

1. Which bathroom is the most practical and cost effective one to modify:
 - How it may affect other members of the household e.g. removal of bath may impact on bathing for other members of the family
 - Sufficient space
 - If the bathroom is on an upper level of the home. You will need to consider if the person will be able to access and benefit from the shower modification now and in the long term – refer to the first bullet point in EMS funding considerations.
2. What other more cost effective and viable alternatives have been considered first:
 - Equipment such as bath board, bath lifter, swivel bather
 - Shower over the bath (note mixer position, fixed rose etc)
3. The position of the level access shower in conjunction with location of toilet, vanity, storage e.g. will it be necessary to walk across the sloping shower area to access the vanity?.
4. doorways widths (Refer doors, doorways and walls Information Sheet).
5. The person's ability to transfer and manoeuvre in the bathroom and any equipment such as a walking aid, hoist, shower commode chair that might be used.
6. Where a standard 1200mm x 1200mm size or shower hose length does not meet the persons needs because they need to accommodate one of the following:



- a tilt'n'space shower commode chair with elevating legrests
- lying down to shower e.g. an adult length fold down bench is 2000mm long
- space for carers to assist

you will need to specify the larger size requirements and explain why

7. Where a 1200mm x1200mm size is not achievable within the existing bathroom space available, check what rooms are adjacent to the bathroom.
8. Often a toilet is adjacent to the bathroom, and these two rooms can be combined by removing the wall to provide more space. Check with the Builder if a wall can be removed to provide more space.
9. Be careful if you are thinking about a LAS floor size smaller than 1200mm x 1200mm if you are considering requesting EMS funding for the modification:
 - sometimes consideration can be given to making one wall of the shower longer and one smaller (such as 1400mm x 1000mm) where space is an issue
 - you will need to discuss options with the EMS Provider to work out if the smaller than 1200mm x 1200mm size being recommended is viable to meet the long term disability related needs, considering things such as:
 - future equipment needs, carers needs etc
 - potential ongoing maintenance issue around sufficient fall for water drainage.

Note:

- Position of any existing towel rails, grab rails, storage cabinets, mirrors, shaving point, extractor fan, light switches, heating etc – identify what can be re-used, what is the person's responsibility vs. essential disability related need.
- whether any existing hardware/fittings can be reused in the modification eg vanity, tapware, shower ware etc.
- where fittings will not be re-used (e.g. taps, bath, vanity etc) check with the person/home owner if they want to retain these – this will need to be noted with the Builder.
- whether under floor structure is timber or concrete (if possible to determine this)

Toilet:

10. Check the toilet outlet pipe - is it rear or side draining – shower commode chairs will not fit a side draining toilet



11. Check accessibility, advise the critical dimensions required:

- from the side
- from the back wall
- does the toilet have to be at a critical height – floor to top of seat?

12. Be careful with raising the height of a toilet:

- as a shower commode chair will likely not fit over the raised toilet so consider whether the person will be able to use the raised height long term

13. Think about where the rails can be positioned in relation to the toilet and sufficient wall fixings for safety.

Vanity:

14. Wheelchair accessible vanities are often pedestal or wall hung, and height is between 750 – 775mm approx for a wheelchair user (as per BRANZ Homes without barriers)

15. Check for safety with hot water pipes, waste pipes.

16. Check the accessibility, advise the critical dimensions required:

- height from floor to top of basin
- height from floor to underside of basin to allow wheelchair access underneath
- width
- depth – reach of the person in relation to the taps, any critical dimensions from the wall etc, what type of taps are needed

Ministry of Health EMS Funding Considerations

Level Access Shower

1. Where access to and design of the house or the bathroom means it is not practical or cost effective to install a MoH EMS funded level access shower, you will need to talk about alternatives such as the home owner paying for the modification themselves or considering moving to a home that matches their disability related needs more appropriately.

2. Funding is only available once for the same type of modification, therefore the modification recommended needs to meet the person's needs now and in the long term:

- The person will need to be fully informed and agree that in accepting funding towards the



bathroom modification in this home they will not be eligible for funding for the same type of modification again in this or any other home.

3. It is helpful to understand from an EMS perspective when funding is being sought for modifying the inside of the home only (such as a level access shower) consideration must also be given to the suitability of the access to the home to meet the needs of the person now or in the long term (next 2 – 3 years):
 - Where potential access modifications are:
 - Non-complex – this is a straight forward situation
 - Complex (i.e. modifications over 1m from ground level or multiple access modifications required to make it suitable) you will need to talk about this with the EMS Provider and the person to consider carefully if this home is suitable to meet their long term needs.
4. Funding can only cover modifications to one bathroom.
5. Funding is not available for the provision of a tiled level access shower, as tiles are often not as slip-resistant as vinyl, they require ongoing regular maintenance to maintain durability and water tightness and they are often more expensive than vinyl.
6. Funding is not available for additional storage or cupboards. However where it has been necessary to remove a cupboard, vanity etc in the course of modifying the home, consideration may be given to replace the cupboard/storage where it can be shown that the person will be unfairly disadvantaged.
7. Heating and ventilation is seen as a standard household requirement, however where there is an essential disability related need for heating or ventilation over and above usual household standard funding may be considered. You will need to talk with the EMS provider about this.
8. The home owner will need to take responsibility for completing any maintenance or upgrading (rectification) work either before the funded housing modification can commence or, if uncovered during the modification works.. This may include.
 - Upgrading or replacing hot water cylinders or water pressure systems
 - Repairing rotten floor boards or walls
 - Upgrading unsafe electrical wiring or power systems
 - Upgrading of services, such as plumbing, water or sanitation systems
 - Where the home owner wants to retain the bath, any additional costs incurred are the home owner's responsibility. This should be noted on the application with discussion



about what is required to meet the essential disability related need.

Vanity:

1. Funding is not available for additional storage or cupboards. Where it has been necessary to remove a cupboard, vanity etc in the course of modifying the home, consideration may be given to replace the cupboard/storage where it can be shown that the person will be unfairly disadvantaged.

Toilet:

1. Funding for an additional toilet will only be considered where it is more cost effective to install a new toilet than move/modify the existing toilet to meet a person's disability related need.

