

ADA Requirements for Hearing Impaired Students

By Jeff Elliot (06/02/2015)

Designing and outfitting schools to accommodate students of varying physical abilities is nothing new, and most school architects and builders are well aware of the building requirements outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, despite a rise in hearing loss among children, many schools remain unaware of the ADA requirements for the hearing impaired. These requirements mandate the installation of assistive listening devices to transmit and amplify sound in every newly constructed or altered classroom and assembly area. The most common type of assembly area in K-12 schools is the classroom.



OWI speakers have their own built-in amplifier, and provide power to the assisted listening systems through the connection. Photo Credit: OWI Incorporated

According to the act, no fewer than two hearing aid compatible receivers are required in all newly constructed or altered spaces. The number of devices required increases based on seating capacity.


“When we think ADA requirements, what we think about is wheelchair access,” said Cory Schaeffer, co-founder of Bluffdale, Utah-based Listen Technologies, a manufacturer of assistive listening products. “However, compared to 1.4 percent of the population in a wheelchair, 17 percent have hearing loss [based on the World Health Organization’s definition].”

One reason that awareness is so low, according to Schaeffer, is many people consider hearing loss an issue that primarily affects older people. However, an estimated 12.5 percent of children and adolescents aged 6–19 years of age (approximately 5.2 million and rising) have suffered permanent damage to their hearing from excessive exposure to noise. The increase is often attributed to the use of ear buds or noise-canceling headphones used to listen to music, digital video players and other devices.

Hearing loss can have a tremendous impact on a child’s education. According the CDC, “even a small amount of hearing loss can have profound, negative effects on speech, language comprehension, communication, classroom learning and social development.”


CLASSROOM COMPLIANT ASSISTIVE LISTENING SYSTEM

ASSISTIVE LISTENING SYSTEM




OWI-KSTM-LT-84

MULTI VOICE COIL AMPLIFIED SPEAKER




AMP-ER2S61

SOUNDFIELD




IR20REC

MIXER/VOLUME CONTROL




MC4

PRIORITY PAGING SYSTEM



* The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 219.2 requires public facilities to provide auditory assistance devices.



- Easy to integrate into every classroom without interference
- Works with all IR assistive listening receivers

- One emitter covers the entire classroom
- Mounting hardware and signage included