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Center for Persons With Disabilities

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MARCH 15, 2012 IS A STARTING POINT--NOT A DEADLINE FOR ADA COMPLIANCE

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The Americans With Disabilities Act aims to make all of society accessible to people with disabilities. On March 15, 2012, new (2010) ADA accessibility standards went into effect. The Department of Justice set that as the compliance date where business, professional, and government buildings are put on notice that they should no longer have architectural barriers that would stop people with disabilities from entering and using what is in the building.

The 2010 ADA Standards are now the new accessibility standards of the land. This date should be viewed as a "starting place" for compliance of the new standards. All new construction and any alterations to existing facilities should begin utilizing the new standards.

What is new in the standards is a special focus on places of recreation— including all gyms, bowling alleys, boating docks, swimming pools, amusement parks, fitness rooms and golf courses, both full-size and miniature — which were not covered in the original law.

Pools, for example, must have two means of entry for disabled people. Lifts are the easiest solutions for small pools; larger pools can have sloped entries and grab-bar-equipped access routes called transfer walls. Golf courses must become wheelchair accessible. Playgrounds should have ramps and be covered with fiber-engineered wood fibers that knit together to form a surface soft enough to cushion falls, yet firm enough for wheelchairs.

Everyone needs to be able to take part in fun indoor and outdoor activities. Being in a wheelchair, having a vision impairment, or being developmentally disabled should not prevent someone from participating along with everyone else. There are many organizations that recognize this great need, and provide accessible activities and events year round.

Locally in Cache County Utah, the Common Ground Outdoor Adventures organization schedules many outdoor activities that are accessible to everyone, providing adaptive equipment if needed to make sure that all can participate.

Many community recreation programs now include adaptive sports and activities in their programs. The Logan Parks and Recreation Center sponsors several activities for those with disabilities who live in Cache County, such as the TOP Sports program for children and youth, and the Adaptive Aquatics Summer program.

Camp Kostopulos Dream Foundation provides recreation opportunities for individuals ages seven and up with mental or physical disabilities.

Wasatch Adaptive Sports provides affordable recreational and educational programs for children and adults with special needs. Programs operate year round to build strength, stamina and self-esteem while enhancing the quality of life for all participants.

Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in 17 Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness and participate with other Special Olympics athletes.

All recreational venues are now mandated to make their facilities available to all people, no matter what their disability. Though the Justice Department is responsible for ADA compliance, there are no ADA "police." It’s up to individuals to report ADA violations. In Utah, the Disability Law Center and Disabled Rights Action Committee are available to help assure the rights of people with disabilities.

All people have the right to play and have fun in any community activity that is available. Here’s hoping for a fun-filled, active summer for each of you!