



# HAND SANITIZER & SOAP DISPENSER PLACEMENT GUIDE

A COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE FOR FACILITY MANAGERS

ADA-Compliant Heights, Traffic Flow Optimization & Drip Management Solutions

Prepared by [zogics.com](https://zogics.com)

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ADA compliance requires 48" maximum height for unobstructed wall-mounted dispensers
- Counter-mounted dispensers: 44" maximum when reaching over 20-25" deep counters
- Drip trays eliminate floor mess by catching excess soap and sanitizer before it reaches the floor
- Placement near sinks significantly improves hand hygiene compliance
- Strategic positioning based on traffic flow patterns prevents congestion
- Pre-measured dispensing (0.4ml/pump) controls waste and reduces dripping

## QUICK REFERENCE: ADA-COMPLIANT DISPENSER HEIGHTS

MOUNTING LOCATION	MAXIMUM HEIGHT	NOTES
Unobstructed wall	48 inches	Measured to operating mechanism
Over 20-25" counter	44 inches	Forward reach over obstruction
Side approach over counter	48" (10" reach) or 46" (24" reach)	Based on reach depth

## ADA-COMPLIANT SOAP & HAND SANITIZER DISPENSER HEIGHTS

The Americans with Disabilities Act sets specific requirements for soap dispenser placement and hand sanitizer dispenser height to ensure accessibility for wheelchair users and individuals with mobility limitations. Per ADA Standards for Accessible Design (Section 308), these measurements ensure equal access for all facility users.

### ► WALL-MOUNTED DISPENSER REQUIREMENTS

**Unobstructed Forward Reach** — When no counter or obstruction blocks access:

- **Maximum height:** 48 inches from floor to operating mechanism
- **Minimum height:** 15 inches (ADA low forward reach requirement)
- **Maximum protrusion:** 4 inches from wall

**Forward Reach Over Obstruction** — When reaching over a counter or lavatory:

- **Counter depth 20-25 inches:** 44 inches maximum height
- **Counter depth under 20 inches:** 48 inches maximum height

These measurements apply to the dispenser's operating button, sensor zone, or pump mechanism—not the top of the unit.

## ▶ OPERATION REQUIREMENTS

ADA compliance extends beyond height. Dispensers must operate with one hand, require no tight grasping, pinching, or twisting, and use maximum 5 pounds of force. Touchless dispensers meet ADA standards when sensors activate without physical manipulation.

## ▶ COMMON ADA VIOLATIONS

**Mounting above trim work:** Installers sometimes place dispensers above wall tile or wainscoting to avoid refinishing. This often exceeds 48" height limits.

**Ignoring counter depth:** A dispenser mounted at 48" over a 24" deep counter violates the 44" requirement for obstructed reach.

**Measuring to wrong point:** Always measure to the operating mechanism (pump, button, or sensor zone), not the top of the dispenser housing.

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## SOAP & SANITIZER DISPENSER PLACEMENT FOR BATHROOM TRAFFIC FLOW

Strategic dispenser placement reduces congestion, encourages proper hand hygiene, and minimizes maintenance issues.

### ▶ HIGH-TRAFFIC RESTROOM PLACEMENT

**Primary location:** Adjacent to every sink — Position soap dispensers within 12-18 inches of each sink's centerline. This placement eliminates reaching across wet counters, reduces water drips on floors, and increases soap usage compliance.

**Secondary location:** Entry/exit points — Mount hand sanitizer dispensers near restroom entrances for pre-entry sanitization, users who skip handwashing, and quick sanitization without entering stalls.

Research shows that even small increases in distance to handwashing facilities can noticeably reduce compliance rates.

### ▶ TRAFFIC FLOW ANALYSIS

**Right-side bias:** Most people naturally gravitate right when entering restrooms. Position dispensers on the right side of sinks for intuitive access.

**Multi-stall restrooms:** Place dispensers between every 2-3 sinks to prevent bottlenecks. Avoid mounting on doors or high-traffic pathways. Leave 30" x 48" clear floor space at each dispenser.

**Single-occupancy restrooms:** Mount dispensers on the wall opposite the toilet, adjacent to the sink.

### ▶ FLOOR STAND VS. WALL-MOUNTED DECISIONS

**Choose floor stand dispensers when:** Walls lack structural support, facility layout changes frequently, portable sanitization needed for events, or high-traffic lobbies require visible hygiene stations.

**Choose wall-mounted dispensers when:** Restrooms have limited floor space, permanent installation preferred, ADA compliance requires specific heights, or cleaning crews need floor access.

## **FACILITY-SPECIFIC PLACEMENT STRATEGIES**

### **► HEALTHCARE FACILITIES**

- Mount dispensers outside every patient room at 42-44" height
- Place alcohol-based sanitizer at nursing stations
- Install soap dispensers at clinical sinks with 6-8" clearance from faucets
- Touchless operation required for infection control
- Drip trays mandatory to prevent floor contamination

### **► FOOD SERVICE**

- Gel soap dispensers with degreasing formulations
- NSF-certified hand soap required
- Heavy-duty dispensers for frequent use
- Easy-clean designs for health inspections
- Position near prep areas and handwash sinks

### **► SCHOOLS & DAYCARES**

- Foam soap (less mess, easier rinsing)
- Gentle formulations for sensitive skin
- Lockable dispensers to prevent vandalism
- Lower mounting: 36-40" for elementary ages
- Install outside classrooms and cafeterias

### **► FITNESS CENTERS**

- Quick-dry hand sanitizer for equipment use
- Moisturizing soap for shower areas
- High-capacity dispensers (1200ml+)
- Mount at 40-42" for standing users
- Position near cardio, weights, and stretching
- Drip trays to protect flooring from alcohol

## DISPENSER RECOMMENDATIONS BY FACILITY TYPE

HEALTHCARE	FOOD SERVICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foam soap with antimicrobial formulation</li> <li>• Alcohol-based sanitizer (70%+ alcohol)</li> <li>• Touchless operation for infection control</li> <li>• Mount outside patient rooms at 42-44"</li> <li>• Drip trays mandatory</li> <li>• Place at nursing stations and clinical sinks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gel soap with degreasing formulations</li> <li>• NSF-certified hand soap required</li> <li>• Heavy-duty dispensers for frequent use</li> <li>• Easy-clean designs for health inspections</li> <li>• Standard 42-44" mounting height</li> <li>• Position near prep areas and handwash</li> </ul>
SCHOOLS & DAYCARES	FITNESS CENTERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foam soap (less mess, easier rinsing)</li> <li>• Gentle formulations for sensitive skin</li> <li>• Lockable dispensers to prevent vandalism</li> <li>• Lower mounting: 36-40" for elementary ages</li> <li>• Install outside classrooms and cafeterias</li> <li>• Consider bright colors for visibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick-dry hand sanitizer for equipment use</li> <li>• Moisturizing soap for shower areas</li> <li>• High-capacity dispensers (1200ml+)</li> <li>• Mount at 40-42" for standing users</li> <li>• Position near cardio, weights, stretching zones</li> <li>• Drip trays to protect flooring from alcohol</li> </ul>

## DISPENSER DRIP PREVENTION: SOLVING FLOOR MESS PROBLEMS

Wall-mounted dispensers drip. Users overpump. Sensors misfire. The result? Soap and sanitizer puddles that create slip hazards and require constant mopping.

### ► WHY DISPENSERS DRIP

- **Overpumping:** Users expect empty dispensers and pump multiple times
- **Sensor sensitivity:** Overly sensitive sensors activate before users are ready
- **Gravity drips:** Residual product in the nozzle slowly drips after dispensing
- **Installation angle:** Dispensers mounted at even a slight downward angle accelerate dripping
- **Alcohol viscosity:** Alcohol-based sanitizer drips more than viscous gel soap

### ► DRIP TRAY SOLUTIONS

Drip trays significantly reduce floor mess and slip risk by catching excess soap and sanitizer before they reach the floor.

Benefits include:

- Preventing floor puddles and slip hazards
- Reducing daily floor cleaning requirements
- Protecting flooring from alcohol damage
- Maintaining a professional restroom appearance

**Installation options:** Attached drip trays mount directly to dispenser housing using manufacturer-specific brackets, 3M adhesive pads, or stainless steel mounting screws. Wall-mounted independent trays install separately when retrofitting existing dispensers.

## ▶ PRODUCT FEATURES THAT REDUCE DRIPPING

- **Pre-measured dispensing:** Automatic dispensers dispense exactly 0.4ml per pump, reducing waste by 25-30%
- **Adjustable sensor zones:** Set shorter detection distances (2-3 inches) to prevent accidental activation
- **Drip-resistant nozzles:** Look for self-closing valves and angled nozzle designs

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## SOAP DISPENSER INSTALLATION BEST PRACTICES

### ▶ PRE-INSTALLATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Locate studs using a stud finder
- ☐ For drywall: Install into studs or use heavy-duty anchors
- ☐ Determine ADA-compliant height for your situation
- ☐ Mark centerline and use level to ensure marks are plumb
- ☐ Verify 30" x 48" clear floor space for wheelchair approach
- ☐ Maintain minimum 12" from sink centerline to avoid water splash

### ▶ STEP-BY-STEP WALL-MOUNTING

1. Use manufacturer-provided template, tape level on wall at measured height
2. Drill pilot holes at marked locations, install wall anchors if needed
3. Secure mounting bracket with provided screws, verify level
4. Hang dispenser body on bracket, lock using provided key or security mechanism
5. Fill with appropriate soap or sanitizer (leave 10% air space)
6. Position drip tray 2-3 inches below nozzle

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## MAINTENANCE SCHEDULES AND TROUBLESHOOTING

### ▶ DAILY MAINTENANCE TASKS (2 MINUTES PER DISPENSER)

- ☐ Check product level via sight glass
- ☐ Wipe exterior with damp cloth
- ☐ Empty drip tray if needed
- ☐ Verify sensor activation (touchless models)
- ☐ Refill when product level reaches 25-30% capacity

## ► WEEKLY MAINTENANCE TASKS (5 MINUTES PER DISPENSER)

- ☐ Wipe all surfaces with approved disinfectant
- ☐ Clean nozzle area with cotton swab
- ☐ Inspect drip tray for cracks or damage
- ☐ Test sensor response at multiple angles
- ☐ Verify mounting security—tighten if loose

## ► MONTHLY MAINTENANCE TASKS (10 MINUTES PER DISPENSER)

- ☐ Remove and clean drip tray completely
- ☐ Inspect mounting bracket for corrosion
- ☐ Check battery level (touchless models)
- ☐ Clean sensor window with lens cleaning cloth
- ☐ Verify all locking mechanisms function

## ► COMMON PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

PROBLEM	CAUSE	SOLUTION
Constant dripping	Nozzle clog, wrong product type	Clean nozzle, verify product compatibility
No dispensing	Empty product, dead batteries	Refill, replace batteries, clean sensor
Inconsistent amount	Low battery, air in line	Replace batteries, prime pump
Sensor won't activate	Dead batteries, sensor obstruction	Replace batteries, clean sensor window
Drip tray overflow	Infrequent emptying	Empty daily, consider larger tray
Dispenser falls from wall	Inadequate anchors	Remount into studs, use heavy-duty anchors

## ADA-COMPLIANT SOAP & HAND SANITIZER DISPENSER HEIGHTS

### ► HIDDEN COSTS OF POOR PLACEMENT

**Daily floor cleaning:** Facilities spend an average of 15 minutes extra daily per restroom cleaning drips and preventing slip hazards.

**Example annual labor cost:** 15 min/day × 365 days = 91.25 hours/year. At \$15/hour = \$1,368.75/year per restroom.  
A 10-restroom facility = \$13,687.50 annually.

**Slip and fall liability:** One slip-and-fall incident costs \$20,000-\$50,000 in medical expenses, legal fees, and settlements on average.

**Flooring damage:** Alcohol-based hand sanitizer damages vinyl tile (yellowing/brittleness), wood flooring (strips finish), and sealed concrete (degrades sealant). Replacement costs: \$3-\$12 per square foot.

## ► INVESTMENT IN PROPER SOLUTIONS

For a 20-dispenser facility: 20 dispensers × \$12 average tray cost = \$240. Labor: 5 hours × \$25/hour = \$125.  
Total investment: \$365

Potential annual savings: Reduced floor cleaning \$2,500 + Flooring protection \$500 = **\$3,000 annual savings**.  
Payback period: 1.5 months.

## ► PREVENTING PRODUCT WASTE

Manual pump dispensers average 3-7.5ml per use (users pump multiple times). Automatic pre-measured dispensers: 0.4-0.8ml per use.

For a high-traffic restroom with 500 users daily: Manual = 912.5 liters/year vs. Automatic = 109.5 liters/year.  
Savings: 803 liters or 88% reduction. At \$8/liter bulk soap cost: \$6,424 annual savings per restroom.

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# IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

## ► PLANNING PHASE

- ☐ Audit current dispenser locations and measure heights
- ☐ Identify ADA compliance issues
- ☐ Map traffic flow patterns in each restroom
- ☐ Determine drip tray requirements
- ☐ Calculate budget for dispensers, products, and installation
- ☐ Select dispenser types (wall-mounted vs. floor stand)
- ☐ Verify product compatibility (gel vs. foam)

## ► INSTALLATION PHASE

- ☐ Locate wall studs and mark mounting points
- ☐ Verify ADA-compliant heights before drilling
- ☐ Install mounting brackets level
- ☐ Attach dispensers securely
- ☐ Mount drip trays 2-3 inches below nozzles
- ☐ Fill dispensers with appropriate products
- ☐ Test operation and sensor response
- ☐ Verify adequate 30" x 48" clear floor space
- ☐ Document installation locations and heights

## ► TRAINING & MONITORING PHASE

- ☐ Train maintenance staff on refilling procedures
- ☐ Demonstrate sensor calibration (if applicable)
- ☐ Show proper drip tray cleaning methods
- ☐ Establish maintenance schedules
- ☐ Inspect daily for first two weeks
- ☐ Track maintenance time and cost savings



### **Questions about dispenser placement for your specific facility?**

Contact Zogics for personalized recommendations based on your restroom layout, traffic volume, and compliance requirements.

\*This checklist is provided as a general guide for hand soap & sanitizer dispenser placement. Zogics assumes no responsibility or liability for any damages, injuries, or misuse of products resulting from the use of this checklist. It is the responsibility of the user to follow all manufacturer instructions, safety guidelines, and industry best practices when installing soap & sanitizer dispenser.