

## FACT SHEET: CONSENT DECREE IN *U.S. v. HILTON WORLDWIDE, INC.*

On Nov. 9, 2010, the United States filed a complaint and consent decree in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to resolve an investigation into Hilton Worldwide Inc. (HWI), formerly, Hilton Hotels Corporation, for a pattern and practice of violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by its owned, managed, joint venture and franchised hotels. The complaint alleges that HWI failed to design and construct its hotels after Jan. 26, 1993, in compliance with the ADA, by failing to provide accessible guest rooms with roll-in showers for individuals with mobility disabilities; failing to disperse designated accessible guest rooms across various classes of rooms and amenities; failing to reasonably modify its policies, practices and procedures to accommodate individuals with disabilities; and failing to provide individuals with disabilities the same opportunity to reserve accessible guest rooms using the Hilton telephonic and internet central reservations systems.

HWI owns, operates and franchises more than 2,800 hotels throughout the United States under various trade and service names and marks including, Hilton, Conrad Hotels & Resorts, Doubletree, Embassy Suites Hotels, Hampton Inn, Hilton Garden Inn, Hilton Grand Vacations, Homewood Suites, the Waldorf Astoria and Home2Suites.

Key provisions of the Consent Decree include the following:

- **Non-Discrimination:** HWI will not engage in any practice that discriminates against individuals with disabilities in violation of Title III of the ADA;
- **Accessibility Surveys of Owned and Joint Venture Hotels:** HWI will conduct surveys of all HWI owned and joint venture hotels built after 1993, to assess whether these hotels fully comply with the ADA Standards for Accessible Design (ADA Standards) in areas open to the public, including designated accessible guest rooms;
- **Accessible Guest Rooms in Owned and Joint Venture Hotels:** HWI will ensure that all HWI owned and joint venture hotels built after 1993 have the required number of designated accessible guest rooms with roll-in showers and designated accessible guest rooms for individuals with hearing impairments within four years;
- **Accessible Additions to Owned and Joint Venture Hotels:** HWI owned and joint venture hotels that build additions will ensure that the additions and path of travel to and through the additions built after 1993 fully comply with the ADA Standards;
- **Accessibility Surveys of Franchised and Managed Hotels:** HWI will require all Hilton franchised or managed hotels that experience a triggering event, defined as entering into a new franchise or management agreement, a change in ownership, or a renewal or extension of a franchise agreement, to conduct a survey of its facilities and to certify that the hotel complies with the ADA;
- **Independent Monitoring of Franchised and Managed Hotels' Accessibility:** HWI will hire an ADA consultant to review the surveys provided by the hotels subject to the

Consent Decree, conduct on-site inspections to verify ADA compliance and will file a report annually with the court;

- **Increased Accessibility at Franchised and Managed Hotels:** HWI hotels that do not comply with the ADA must develop and submit a plan to the ADA consultant detailing how and when it will comply with the ADA requirements; HWI hotels will have seven years to complete all remediation
- **Increased Information about Accessibility in Reservations:** HWI will ensure that the Hilton reservations systems, both telephonic and internet based; provide information about the availability of accessible rooms, as well as details about the configuration, amenities, and views available in each accessible room, and that individuals with disabilities are able to reserve accessible rooms with specific features and amenities;
- **Website Accessibility:** HWI will improve the accessibility of its websites by bringing them into compliance with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Level A;
- **Reservations Policy to Ensure Availability of Accessible Rooms:** HWI will institute a reservations policy for accessible guest rooms that will hold open two non-premium accessible guest rooms as the last rooms sold at each hotel;
- **New Company Standards to Ensure ADA Compliance:** HWI will amend its brand standards for all its brands to require ADA compliance in new construction and alterations, to require training for employees, to designate an ADA contact person at each hotel in its in-room guest materials and to amend its quality assurance reviews to incorporate ADA compliance;
- **Prototype Plans and Designs:** HWI will ensure that its prototype building plans or designs comply with the ADA;
- **Company-Wide Accessibility Point Person:** HWI will designate one national ADA compliance officer who will serve as the primary HWI administrative contact on disability issues for all HWI brand hotels;
- **Expanded Employee Training:** HWI employees whose essential job functions require them to interact with hotel guests, along with front desk employees, general managers and chief building engineers, will under training on some or all of the following topics – how to deal with guests with disabilities; proper assignment of accessible rooms; emergency procedures for guests with disabilities; reasonable modifications of policies and procedures for guests with disabilities; maintenance of accessible features; the provision and use of roll-in showers with fold-down seats and removable tub seats; and the operation of communications equipment for guests with hearing impairments; and
- **Civil Penalties:** HWI will pay a civil penalty of \$50,000.