



BATH AND SHOWER SEATS

STANDARD TUB AND SHOWER SEATS

The primary difference between a tub seat and a shower seat is the seat height. Most units intended for tub use are 15 to 16 inch in height, while shower models are approximately 20 to 21 inches high.

The seat height for the tub model is intended to position the seat approximately level with the tub wall. Seat heights that are significantly lower than this often pose a problem for the user when it comes time to exit the tub. From these lower positions, body mechanics are bad for both user and attendant, creating the potential for a serious accident. One slip and the user AND the attendant may end up in adjoining hospital beds.

The objection frequently arises that this seat height prevents the user from taking a "real tub bath." Users cannot sit and soak in the warm water. This is certainly a valid statement. Bathing at this height usually requires the use of a hand shower. The fact remains that the more you lower the seat height below the wall of the tub, the more difficult it is for the user to get down to, and up from, the bath seat. This obviously results in the seat providing less and less assistance, thus creating greater risk of injury. Lower seat heights can certainly be provided, but tub seat heights below 11 inches are generally not recommended.

INSTALLATION

Installation of the standard bath seat consists simply of placing it in the tub in the appropriate position. This is usually near the end opposite the faucets. Most bath seats have rubber or plastic feet that are slip resistant but certainly not slip proof. Wiping these feet with alcohol removes any oil, grease or talc and enhances the slip resistant characteristics. The feet should be cleaned initially on a new product and cleaning should be repeated periodically during regular use. It is also important to keep the bathtub clean and free of soap film to help prevent slipping.

In spite of all the precautions to prevent slipping, it is important that the user understands the necessity to exert force only straight down in a vertical direction when sitting down or rising from the seat. Any significant force in a horizontal direction is likely to cause the seat to slip or even to tip over. These are relatively lightweight products, and they are not anchored to the tub in any way.

Please call our office if more information is needed regarding other products that will further enhance your safety and independence while bathing.