



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Office of Construction &  
Facilities Management

Office of Facilities Planning  
Facilities Standards Service

# DESIGN ALERT

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## For Immediate Application on all Current Projects Patient Safety in VHA Bathrooms

**ISSUE:** The VA National Center for Patient Safety has identified three recent VA projects with the following patient safety issues: a lack of slip resistant flooring and water ponding in Inpatient Bathrooms and Tub rooms. These conditions increase the potential for patient and staff falls.

**DISCUSSION:** CFM standards are consistent in calling for slip resistant flooring materials in bathrooms. The current VA Master Specification for Ceramic & Porcelain Tiles for Bathroom Floors (09 30 13, CERAMIC/PORCELAIN TILING) calls for Slip Resistance with a coefficient of friction equal to or greater than 0.42 for interior tile floors when wet in accordance with ANSI A137.1.

VA combats ponding and standing water in accessible bathrooms by calling for 3" slab depressions coupled with a maximum floor slope of a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " per foot tapered to a floor drain. This VA standard is found in section 4.30.2 entitled Shower Floors, under Chapter 4 of the Architectural Design Manual of PG 18 10. The intent is to have the slab depression for the entire bathroom floor area to allow for a gentle taper to a floor drain in the shower.

**CONCLUSION:** Patient & staff safety is a very serious concern. VA Design Criteria and Construction Standards in the [Technical Information Library \(TIL\)](#) are in place to assure the safety, security, and quality of optimum healthcare. VA Standards are required for all VA projects, whether new, renovation, or retrofit projects. Architects, Engineers, Designers, Contracting Officers, Project Managers, and Administrators should work closely with CFM to apply Standards appropriately to every project, to ensure consistency and safety to every VA project. The need for bathroom floors made of slip resistant materials and a proper slope to drain needs to be clearly understood as an essential design component.

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:** Revise Peer Review Checklist to include verification of slip resistant material and verification of floor slope to drain in submittal requirements for entire bathroom and tub room floor areas.

Revise Spec. Section 09 30 13, CERAMIC/PORCELAIN TILING. Under Article 3.3, Paragraph C, add Subparagraph 6 requesting verification of slope to drain.

Revise appropriate Design Guides, Manuals, and other criteria for consistency and enforcement of standard.

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- National Center for Patient Safety
- CFM, Consulting Support Service
- CFM, Facilities Standards Service

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