THE QUESTION I ASKED ALL WEEK AT IMEX AMERICA 2026

EVERY. SINGLE. PERSON. said no.

Where you're standing right now, if an emergency alarm went off, do you know where you're supposed to go?

Now imagine you can't hear the alarm, or can't take the stairs.

Accessibility and emergency preparedness start on your registration form.

- Registration questions that drive accurate headcounts, room blocks & rentals
- Evacuation plans and CPR/First Aid staffing written into your contract
- Floor plans, furniture, lighting, hearing-aid-ready AV, allergen-safe food
- Accessible speakers, printed materials & transportation

D.A.V.I.D. CONSULTING · FROM REGISTRATION TO EVACUATION

The back of the card I handed out on the show floor. Swipe for what I found.

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Diversity · Accessibility · Vision · Inclusion · Dedication

ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION EVENT REVIEW

Preview Edition — 3 of 8 Documented Findings

Trade Show Findings: Emergency Preparedness, Arrival & Transportation, and the Show Floor

EVENT OBSERVED

IMEX America 2026 — Las Vegas, Nevada

DATES OBSERVED

October 12–15, 2026

PREPARED BY

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Founder, D.A.V.I.D. Consulting — Live Events, Accessibility & Inclusion Strategy

October 2026

PUBLIC PREVIEW — FULL 8-FINDING REVIEW AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

About This Preview

This preview shares 3 of the 8 findings from a full accessibility and inclusion review of IMEX America 2026, one of the largest trade shows in the business events industry, with roughly 3,000 exhibitor booths. I attended all four days as a buyer attendee and as a Deaf and neurodivergent accessibility professional, and spoke with exhibitors, contractors, on-site staff, and every attendee I saw using a wheelchair or scooter.

The three findings below show the range of what this kind of review surfaces: a life-safety gap, an arrival-and-departure barrier, and a show-floor design gap. The complete review, including findings on mobility devices, staff readiness and wayfinding, captioning and session access, wellbeing spaces, evening events, and a priority-ranked action table, has been shared with show management.

Selected Findings

FINDING 1 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & DUTY OF CARE

OBSERVATION

- **Passed between parties.** When I asked show staff, on-site First Aid, and the mobility scooter rental company how attendees with disabilities would be alerted or evacuated in an emergency, each pointed to someone else.
- **No procedure.** On-site First Aid had no procedure for helping attendees who use mobility devices evacuate, and no one on the medical team signed ASL.
- **No emergency information for renters.** Scooter renters received an orientation on using the device, but nothing on what to do in an emergency.
- **Attendees had no idea where to go.** Every person I asked, "If an alarm went off right now, do you know where to go?" answered no.
- **Calling for help was unclear.** There were no posted instructions on whether to call 911 or in-house security, and I did not see a single AED on the property.
- **Unannounced changes.** A session on my schedule was cancelled with no app notification. A Deaf attendee cannot rely on a spoken announcement.

RISK / IMPACT

This is a life-safety gap, not a service gap. Show management and the host venue share a duty of care for everyone on site. In an emergency, the attendees least able to self-evacuate, or to hear an alarm or announcement, would have the least information and no assigned helper.

RECOMMENDATION

- Write a joint show-management and venue evacuation plan that names who assists people with disabilities, where the areas of refuge are, and how responders learn who is waiting there. Brief every staff member and contractor on it.

- Give every mobility-device renter an emergency card at pickup, and keep a list of who has a device out.
- Send emergency alerts and schedule changes by app push and text, and caption announcements on session screens.
- Post emergency instructions, with a number to call and a text option, and mark AEDs on the floor plan.

FINDING 2 ARRIVAL & TRANSPORTATION

OBSERVATION

- **Rideshare moved far away.** Only taxis and hosted buyer shuttles could pick up and drop off at the convention center entrances. All rideshare moved to a garage shared with hotel, casino, and neighboring-resort guests, on top of roughly 20,000 attendees.
- **No accessible choice.** Standard taxis cannot take most mobility devices, and the hosted buyer shuttles I saw were not wheelchair accessible. Rideshare apps let riders request an accessible vehicle. Two hosted buyers I know who use scooters could not ride the free shuttle.
- **Fire doors as the route.** The path to rideshare ran through fire exit doors with no automatic openers. On the final day, the hallway doors weren't opened, and scooter users had to park their device and push through three sets of heavy doors on foot.
- **No wayfinding.** There was no signage pointing to the new pickup area, no staff to direct people, and the pickup island had no curb ramp.

RISK / IMPACT

Arrival and departure are part of the event experience, and this was the issue attendees raised with me most often, unprompted. The changes took away attendees' choice of how to travel and forced some to leave their mobility devices behind.

RECOMMENDATION

- Keep at least one accessible rideshare and accessible-vehicle pickup at the main entrance, with seating, shade, and a curb ramp.
- Contract only wheelchair-accessible shuttles. Accessible fleets, including evacuation vehicles, already exist.
- If a route must use fire doors, staff them at peak times or add power openers, and sign the route with distance in feet.

FINDING 3 THE SHOW FLOOR

OBSERVATION

- **4 of roughly 3,000.** I found only four booths whose design built in accessibility, such as an integrated ramp.
- **Exhibitors weren't told.** Many exhibitors said no one had told them people with disabilities would be attending. One attendee arrived for a booked meeting and the exhibitor had to rearrange all their furniture to fit her scooter.

- **"Not our responsibility."** Contractors repeatedly told me accessibility was the client's or the venue's job.
- **Built for standing.** Registration kiosks, interactive floor plan monitors, water refill buttons, food stations, refrigerators, and happy hour bars were all at standing height.
- **Nowhere to park.** With no designated spots for mobility devices, riders parked in empty spaces and walked across the aisle to their meetings, which defeats the purpose of the device.

RISK / IMPACT

Attendees with visible disabilities have the same buying power as anyone else, but the show floor largely wasn't built for them. Every standing-height counter, button, or bar sends the same message: this isn't for you.

RECOMMENDATION

- Add an accessibility section to the exhibitor manual: who is attending, aisle and counter-height guidance, and a short staff-etiquette guide.
- Recognize accessible booth designs with an award or floor-plan icon so other exhibitors see what good looks like.
- Provide a seated-height option at every kiosk, monitor, water station, food station, and bar, and mark mobility-device parking on the floor plan.

This Is 3 of 8

These three findings come from one show, observed as an attendee, not as a hired inspector. The full review documents five more findings, covering mobility devices on site, staff readiness and wayfinding, captioning and session access, wellbeing spaces, and evening events, plus the organizations already getting accessibility right and a priority-ranked action plan for the next edition.

If one week as an attendee surfaced this much, imagine what a planned accessibility review would surface for your conference, trade show, venue, or tour, before it becomes a guest-safety incident, a viral complaint, or legal exposure.

Let's Talk

D.A.V.I.D. Consulting (Diversity, Accessibility, Vision, Inclusion and Dedication) partners with show management, venues, agencies, DMCs, and event teams to build accessible, inclusive live events, from the registration form to the evacuation plan. Founded by Gina Muoio, who is Deaf and neurodivergent, with 25+ years in live events.

To discuss an accessibility review for your own event or venue, please reach out directly.

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