

## GRADUATION WEEK INFORMATION FOR HANDICAPPED GUESTS

**Welcome to the United States Air Force Academy; we hope you enjoy this momentous occasion with your cadet!**

The following information is provided to assist you with your medical or handicapped needs while visiting the Academy. Please note that USAFA does not issue handicapped parking passes. Individuals are asked to bring their own state-issued handicapped (H/C) passes in order to access the handicapped parking lot in the Cadet Area (north of Stillman Field) or the handicapped lots at the stadium on Graduation Day (note that if you do not have a portable pass, you may still park in the H/C lots – just speak with the attendant). Mobility impaired guests should bring or rent any walkers, wheelchairs, breathing support or other special-needs or medical equipment they require. Please see the list of local companies offering durable medical equipment below. Included in this listing are reputable companies who have provided equipment and supplies to TRICARE beneficiaries.

### **HIGH ALTITUDE HEALTH CONCERNS:**

The Air Force Academy Cadet Area is approximately 7,300 feet above sea level. At this altitude, it is possible to contract an illness known as acute mountain or high altitude sickness. Symptoms may include headache, malaise, nausea, vomiting and shortness of breath. Most cases are mild but the altitude may exacerbate other existing medical conditions. High altitude sickness usually resolves within a few days once an individual has adapted to the increased elevation. The best way to avoid illness is to allow yourself to acclimatize: try not to over-exert yourself in the first days after your arrival and make sure to drink sufficient fluids to avoid dehydration. Don't go sightseeing at higher elevations (i.e., up in the mountains) until after you have been in Colorado Springs for a few days. Alcohol or drug consumption may worsen these symptoms.

Throughout your visit, please be prepared with comfortable walking shoes and water, since bus wait times may be long during peak periods. Note the local weather reports and dress accordingly. Although H/C and bus transportation will be available throughout the cadet area on Tuesday of Graduation Week, there may be extensive walking required from bus stops to your final destination. Guests with serious medical conditions such as anemia, heart disease or pulmonary disease should consult their doctor about the need for portable oxygen or preventive medication and the advisability of traveling to the Academy. Please make sure to consider this when bringing elderly or infirm guests to the Academy.

### **GRAD WEEK HANDICAPPED TRANSPORTATION:**

On Wednesday of Graduation Week, specially equipped handicapped shuttle vans will transport disabled guests from the handicapped parking area (north of the parade field) to locations throughout the Cadet Area. These shuttles will attempt to get you as close to your desired location as possible.

### **GRAD CEREMONY PARKING/SEATING:**

At Falcon Stadium, H/C parking is available in Lot 5 with some limited spots in Lot 1. Golf carts will be available to transport handicapped guests from the parking area to stadium gates. Wheelchair and handicapped seating is located at the top row of Sections L2-L14, M-2, M-6, M-10, M-14, U-2, U-5, U-9 and U-12. Although these seats are not ticketed and are available first-come, first-served for handicapped guests and one companion, guests must have a graduation ticket to enter the stadium. Please make sure to arrive early to get this seating (the stadium gates open at 7:00 a.m.). Remember that all seating in Falcon Stadium is outdoors and weather conditions may be uncomfortable for infirm or elderly guests; the ceremony will take place rain or shine, so be prepared for any sort of weather. Note that there are no elevators in the stadium and no indoor or covered seating. Once the ceremony begins, guests may not leave the stadium until after the Thunderbirds show is concluded; keep this in mind when making travel plans following the ceremony.

Handicapped parking is available in the lot just north of the parade field. Guests should bring their own state handicapped placards. On Monday and Tuesday prior to graduation, handicapped shuttles will transport guests to event locations in the Cadet Area. For events on Saturday and Sunday, guests may park in the public lot closest to the event they are attending (such as the Harmon Hall lot for the Baccalaureate Services on Sunday at the Cadet Chapel). Handicapped/wheelchair seating is available at the top of L3-L13 sections of the stadium, which are accessible via stadium gates 3 and 4. Additional handicapped/wheelchair seating is available at the top of Sections M-2, M-6, M-10, M-14, U-2, U-5, U-9 and U-12. These seats are not ticketed and are first come, first served. Wheelchair guests may sit here accompanied by one attendant. Stadium gates open at 7:30 a.m. and we recommend you arrive early if you require this seating. Please note that there are no elevators in the stadium. In addition, please remember that this is an outdoor, uncovered stadium. Whatever the weather brings on Graduation Day (very hot or very cold or even rain!), the guests in the stadium will have to tolerate for the duration of the ceremony. Once the ceremony begins, no one may leave the stadium until the end of the Thunderbirds Performance and following the departure of the commencement speaker (around 1:15 p.m.). Please take this into account when making post-graduation travel plans.

Hearing-impaired guests may ask their cadet to work through their squadron's graduation representative to request sign language interpreters for the cadet parades or the graduation ceremony, if required.

### **ALTERNATE CEREMONY VIEWING LOCATION:**

For those guests who cannot attend the ceremony at the stadium due to health concerns or handicap status, a simultaneous broadcast will be displayed at Richter Lounge, located in Arnold Hall. A map of Richter lounge is available below.

## HANDICAPPED INFORMATION

Disabled guests should bring or rent any walkers, wheelchairs, breathing support or other special-needs or medical equipment they require (see question #36 below for more information). They should also bring their state-issued "handicapped" placard or other documentation in order to park in designated handicapped lots. Because of the high altitude and possibility of extreme (hot, cold and/or wet) weather, guests with serious medical conditions such as anemia, heart disease or pulmonary disease should consult their doctor about the need for portable oxygen or preventive medication and the advisability of traveling to the Academy. Although handicapped shuttles will be available, there may be extensive walking required from bus stops to your final destination. Please make sure to consider this when bringing elderly or infirm guests to the Academy.

For events in the Cadet Area, shuttle buses that pick up guests from the handicapped lot just north of Stillman Parade Field will have special hydraulic lifts for wheelchairs. We recommend that guests bring (or rent) foldable or portable wheelchairs for convenience with the shuttles (see question #36 for more information). For the Graduation Ceremony at Falcon Stadium, golf carts will assist guests in getting from the handicapped parking lot just north of the stadium to the stadium gates. Golf carts will not be able to accommodate standard wheelchairs, however, so please consider this when making your plans. Wheelchair guests may want to ride in the golf cart while having another guest push their wheelchair to the gate. Following the ceremony, golf carts will transport handicapped guests back to the parking area. If you need assistance, you may ask security staff at the gates to call for a golf cart.

## COMMISSIONING CEREMONIES:

Individual squadrons are responsible for arranging any required transportation for commissioning ceremonies. Parents or cadet guests who anticipate difficulty must contact their cadet to arrange special transportation.

If you have any concerns about handicapped support during Graduation Week, please email [graduation.info@usafa.edu](mailto:graduation.info@usafa.edu)

## **Local DME Companies that offer oxygen, wheelchairs, parts for CPAP machines (no government endorsement is suggested):**

### AeroCare

Customer service: 719-260-0821

Fax: 719-278-2250

### HealthStar

Customer service: 719-434-4860

Fax: 866-923-3508

Emergencies: 303-258-6230

### Preferred Healthcare

Customer service: 719-548-9220

Fax: 719-548-1038

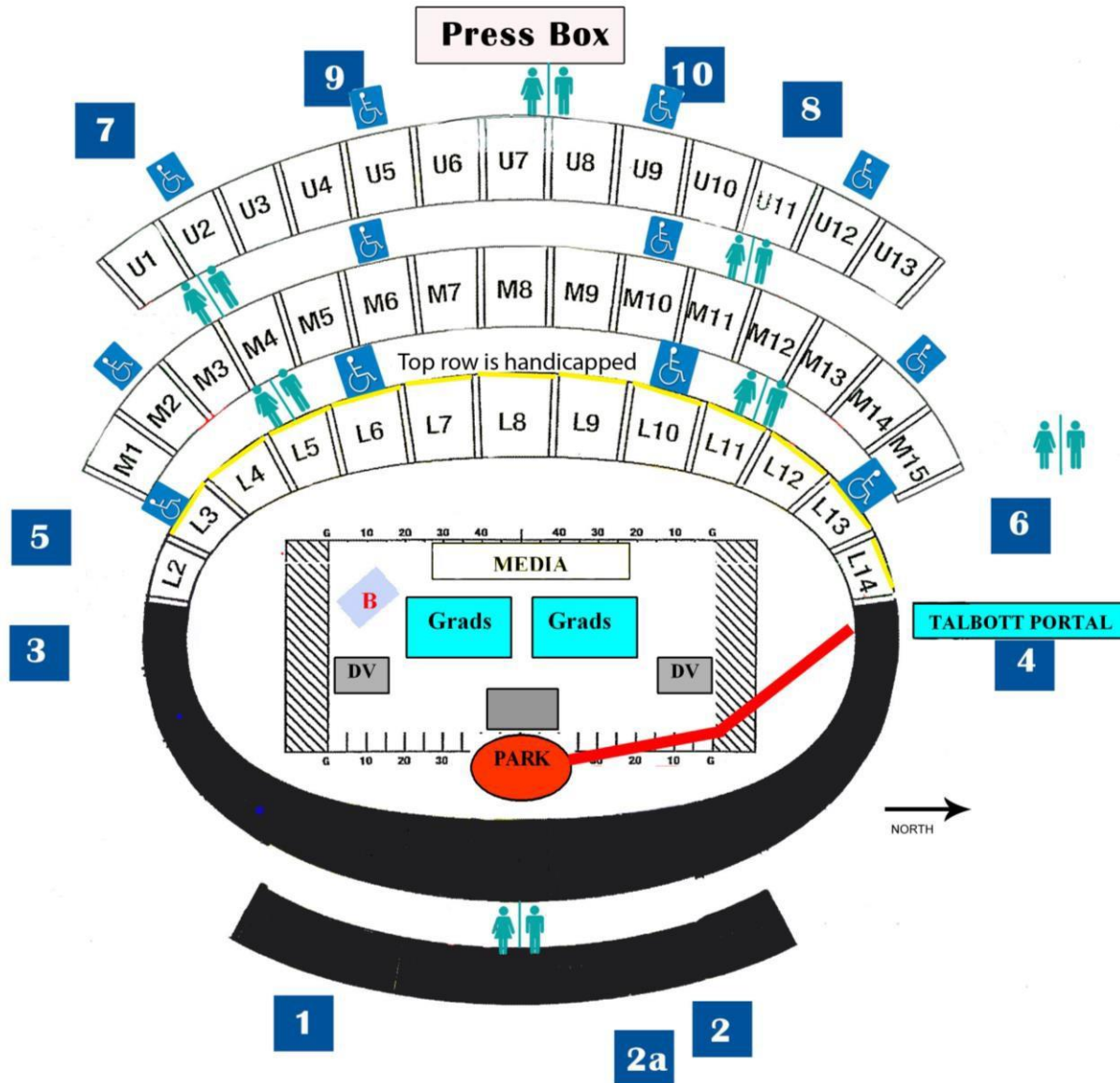
### Summit Respiratory Services

Customer service: 719-593-8476

Fax: 719-522-1752

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FALCON STADIUM GRADUATION CEREMONY SEATING



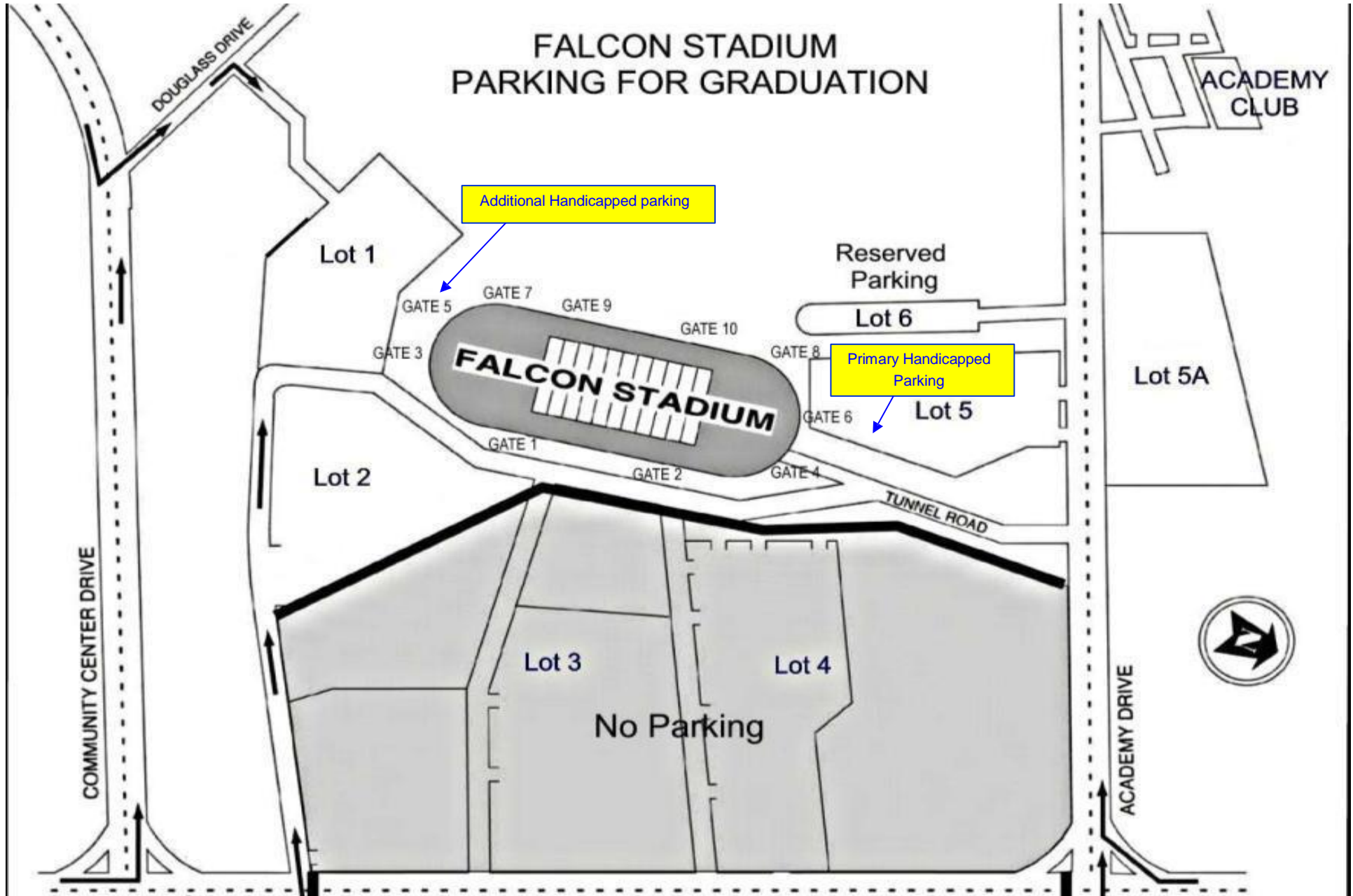
## Falcon Stadium Handicapped Seating

is available in the entire top row of Sections L-2 through L14 (accessible via Gates 3 & 4) and there are wheelchair cutouts (for a wheelchair guest and one companion) at the top of Sections M-2, M-6, M-10, M-14, U-2, U-5, U-9 and U-12.

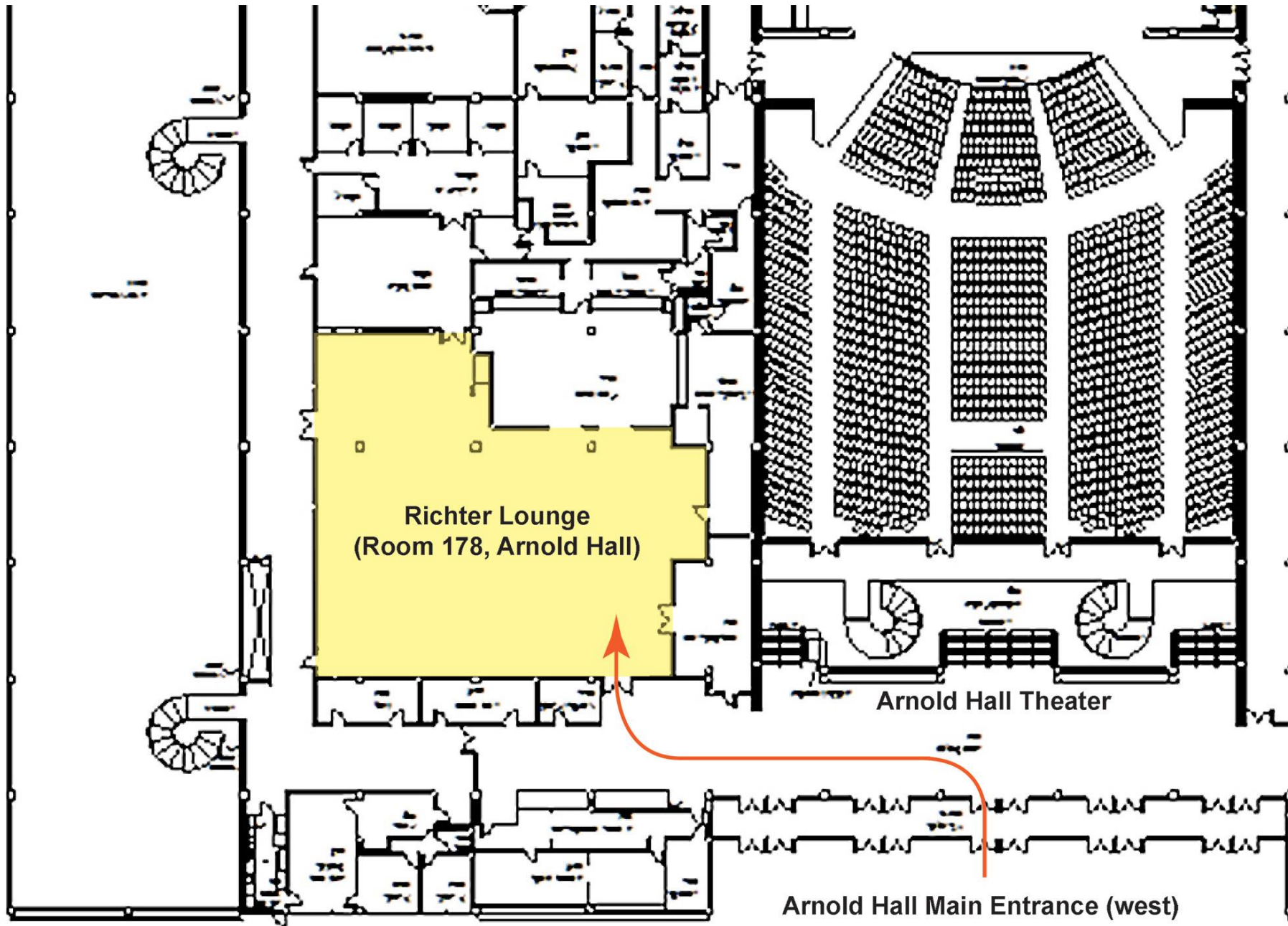
All handicapped seating is not ticketed and is first-come, first-served, as is handicapped parking. We recommend you arrive early if you require handicapped accommodation.

Note that there is no indoor or covered seating for any guests attending graduation. Once the ceremony begins, no one may leave the stadium until after the Thunderbirds show has completed (10:00 a.m. until approximately 1:00 p.m.) Please take this into account if you plan to attend.

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Arnold Hall - 2308 Cadet Drive, U.S. Air Force Academy