In 2004 the FAWSsit™ Portable Shower was invented and patented by Care Giver Support Products. The shower was designed to be a complete shower for use by individuals in wheelchairs who may not be able or wish to remodel. It was designed to be effective, safe, available for use by anyone with a disability no matter how severe, and safe and effective for caregivers. It also needed to be fully assembled but also completely portable, strong yet lightweight and made with high quality construction to be a true long term alternative to remodeling, and it had to be affordable, even for people who were not homeowners. All of those goals were met and a whole new option was made available for individuals with disabilities. Unfortunately, copycat companies have tried to offer lower cost showers or ones that improved on the FAWSsit™ concept; but let me explain why their attempts to truly meet all of the objectives have failed.

First, an explanation of how the FAWSsit™ Portable Shower works: It is a fully assembled, anodized aluminum frame with a lift up bar to allow the individual in the wheelchair to simply be rolled in using no lifts, transfers, or “wheelies” to get over the edge of the water collection pan. The double layer vinyl water collection pan has a wedge of foam sealed between the layers to direct the waste water to the back of the pan where a custom designed, UL Safety Rated, mounted water removal pump pulls the water out of the pan while the shower is going. The powerful pump keeps the pan almost completely empty and enables exit from the shower as soon as the shower is completed. The source of water for the shower unit is any standard sink faucet. Using a snap on/quick connect adapter, the shower sprayer connects to the faucet, and the shower head has an on/off lever and spray adjuster to enable setting water temperature at the sink rather than after the individual is under the spray in the shower. Further, the snap on adapter holds the shower sprayer onto the faucet preventing “blow off” when the on/off lever is turned. And, the sprayer head can be either hand held or clipped to any location on the frame to enable “hands-free” showering. Sprayer units as well as exit hoses come standard at 15 feet in length, but can be upgraded to 20, 25 or even 30 foot units that do not require splicing to get adequate length from the sink to the shower. In addition, the heavy weight, germicide imbedded (mildew resistant) vinyl curtains come as a single unit, but can have the front left open to enable full caregiver access to the individual in the wheelchair. The FAWSsit™ Portable Shower is the ONLY truly portable shower unit which allows for caregiver access to assist with lower body cleaning! And, it is completely MADE IN AMERICA.

And now, a comparison to the other options:

One alternative is a kit which requires assembly each time it is to be used. It needs to be screwed together, with the screws going directly into the PVC which makes up the frame. To take it down requires reversing the process and, as most people know, PVC can only be
screwed into for a limited number of times before it does not hold. The alternative is to put the kit together and leave it standing.

To get into the shower, they indicate that the individual in the wheelchair should do a “wheelie” to jump over the edge of the water collection pan. Their pan is a free standing, light weight, single layer vinyl whose sides are held upright with only foam sides. The sides of the FAWSsit™ pan are held to the frame using simple but strong Velcro™ straps. The front of the pan is also attached to the frame AFTER the individual has rolled into the shower. A bar simply drops down from the frame to form this fourth side for support. A pan which is only supported by thin foam filled sides risks structural failure and can result in gallons of water flowing onto the floor. Safety for a client’s house matters as well as safety of the individuals involved in showering.

Just as pan strength matters if there is water buildup, so does the pump matter to keep the pan emptying while the shower is in progress. Shower kits have used garden fountain style pumps and other off-the-shelf units. The FAWSsit custom-designed UL rated pump can pull up to 4 gallons per minute of water from the water collection pan and send it down a drain. And, the FAWSsit™ pump is attached to the frame for safety as well as easy access to the on/off switch.

Some of the pump alternatives offered are so slow in removing the water, that no exit can be made from the shower stall until all of the water is removed, which leaves the individual sitting inside the shower stall until all of the water is out. This is no better than the walk-in bathtubs which also require waiting for the tub to empty before opening the door.

As critical as the operation of the parts differences described so far, the shower curtain configuration is one of the most significant for the health of the patient.

Shower kits employ two light weight vinyl curtains to hang on the separate sides of their PVC shower frame. The curtains also must be kept closed on all four sides of the light kit shower, giving no access for a caregiver to assist with perineal and lower body cleaning. Only upper body bathing can be assisted.

FAWSsit™ Showers, by contrast, supply a single curtain which can be left open in front to enable full caregiver access when needed, or enable hands free showering or hand held, so the
showering experience can be truly independent and complete. Water leakage is not a problem with the FAWSsit™ because there are no breaks in the curtain.

There are also companies who offer just sprayers, just pans, or units which you buy ala carte. One ala carte company supplies all of the components to modify a house for a shower, but their shower requires a ramp for access, requires a plumber to modify the water source, and also requires construction so the shower either needs to be left in place, or re-assembled each time it is to be used. There are also products which claim to be “portable”, but require the assembly of fiberglass panels and a ramp for access. Neither of these can offer caregiver access for lower body cleaning either.

But there is one point which, too often, is the primary purchase criterion: Price. And the adage that you “get what you pay for” does not in all cases hold true. For the shower kits, you get a cheap shower with severe limitations for safety and effectiveness, but it is still not inexpensive. For short term use, such as during recovery from hip or knee surgery, this may be a reasonable option. For long term use, however, especially for individuals with permanent disabilities, this type of alternative will only result in the need to keep replacing the kits.

For the ala carte showers you get what you purchase. If you opt to get all of the options required for a full shower, the price will be higher than the FAWSsit™ showers. Even though they may have greater longevity than the shower kits, these showers cannot be folded away for storage after the shower is completed. FAWSsit™ showers are all designed to fold up when showering is finished and to store away in a space of less than 10 inches in depth.

The fiberglass shower stalls are considerably MORE expensive than the FAWSsit™ Portable Showers, nor do they offer different model alternatives to address the needs of individuals with all different types of disabilities, or different types of living considerations.

FAWSsit™ Portable Showers have 5 separate models to choose from to address the most basic wheelchair needs to the needs of seriously disabled individuals who require a fully reclining style of wheelchair.

Over the past 15 years that Care Giver Support Products, LLC (owners of the FAWSsit™ Portable Showers) has been in business, every shower has been custom made and the
company has worked with its dealers, with both professional and family caregivers, with occupational therapists, physical therapists and discharge planners as well as Veterans Administration Medical Centers to provide the highest quality showering alternatives to remodeling. We have clients who have used our products every day for up to these 15 years! Products come with a full one year warranty on all components except the frame. For the frame there is a TEN YEAR warranty.

The expression, “buyer beware” has never been more appropriate than in this industry. There is still only ONE truly portable, effective and SAFE self-contained shower which requires nothing more than access to a standard sink and a standard 110V outlet----The FAWSsit™ Portable Shower.

Care Giver Support Products, LLC is a U. S. Certified Service Connected Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) and FAWSsit Showers are proudly made in the United States of America.