



Requirement 7. Usable kitchens and bathrooms.

Kitchens and bathrooms must be usable, so that an individual in a wheelchair can maneuver in the space provided. In the kitchen, there must be 30" x 48" clear floor area parallel to and centered on the kitchen sink and range. Many times the sink or range is positioned into the "elbow" of an L-shaped kitchen, or sometimes in a small angled section of counter that does not provide a full 48" clear floor area. Sinks in bathrooms should be positioned with 30" x 48" clear floor area parallel to and centered on the sink.

For comprehensive information about the requirements and detailed illustrations to explain how to apply the guidelines, see:

**Fair Housing Act Design Manual:
A Manual to Assist Designers and
Builders in Meeting the Accessibility
Requirements of the FHA**

www.huduser.org/Publications/PDF/FAIRHOUSING/fairfull.pdf

Get help to create accessible housing! Contact us:

King County Office of Civil Rights & Open Government

401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 215
Seattle, WA 98104-1818
206-263-2446
TTY Relay: 711
Civil-Rights.OCR@kingcounty.gov
www.kingcounty.gov/CivilRights

Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST (Design and Construction Resource Center)

888-341-7781 (V/TTY)
www.fairhousingfirst.org

Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity Office, HUD

909 First Avenue, Suite 205, OAE
Seattle, WA 98104
800-877-0246 or 206-220-5170
206-220-5185 TTY
www.HUD.gov

**This brochure is available in
other formats upon request.
Call 206-263-2446 or TTY 711.**

The 7 Basic Design and Construction Requirements of the Fair Housing Act



**Office of Civil Rights &
Open Government**

Builders who comply with the FHA during construction find that their costs only rise about a third of 1%. Retrofitting a building that has already been constructed can cost considerably more.

The Fair Housing Act requires that new construction of "covered multifamily dwellings"; both private and public, comply with the Fair Housing Act's design and construction requirements. Covered multifamily dwellings are buildings that have four or more units and include all of the ground floor units and, in an elevator building, all units in these buildings. These requirements apply to housing that was designed or constructed for first occupancy after March 13, 1991. Here are the seven basic design and construction requirements:

Requirement 1. An accessible building entrance on an accessible route.

All covered multifamily dwellings must have at least one accessible building entrance on an accessible route unless it is impractical to do so because of the terrain or unusual characteristics of the building site. Accessible entrance walks cannot be steeper than 1:20 (5%) unless they are designed as ramps. Ramps cannot be steeper than 1:12 (8.33%) and must have railings and edge protection.



Requirement 2. Accessible public and common use areas.

Covered housing must have accessible and usable public and common use areas. This includes building-wide fire alarms, parking lots, storage areas, indoor and outdoor recreational areas, lobbies, mailrooms and mailboxes, and laundry areas. Curb ramps may not be steep, lack side wings, or be accessed only from heavily trafficked areas. Curb ramps must be designed and built in a way that is compliant with ANSI standards. Accessible parking at site facilities is required.



Requirement 3. Doors usable by a person in a wheelchair.

All doors that allow passage into and within all premises must be wide enough to allow passage by people using wheelchairs. Doors to walk-in closets must provide a nominal 32" clear opening (31 $\frac{5}{8}$ ").

Requirement 4. Accessible route into and through the dwelling unit.

There must be an accessible route into and through each covered unit. Door thresholds should not exceed the maximum height of $\frac{3}{4}$ " and should be beveled 1:2 or less.



State and local requirements may be more restrictive than federal requirements! Before construction, consult applicable federal, state and local regulations for compliance.

Requirement 5. Environmental controls in accessible locations.

Light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls must be in accessible locations. Outlets must be located at least 15" above the finished floor, and light switches and thermostats no higher than 48".

Requirement 6. Bathroom walls reinforced for later installation of grab bars.

Reinforcement in bathroom walls must be installed, so that grab bars can be added when needed. The law does not require installation of grab bars in bathrooms. Reinforcement must be placed in walls during construction around tubs, toilets and showers.

10 SAFE HARBORS FOR FHA COMPLIANCE

A safe harbor is a law, accessibility standard, or building code identified by HUD as consistent with the Fair Housing Act's Design and Construction Requirements. For more info, see www.fairhousingfirst.org/faq/safeharbors.html.