

# FACTS ABOUT VISITABLE HOUSING IN CANADA



## Concept

Visitable housing is the concept of designing and building homes with basic accessibility features that provide easy access on the main level for everyone.

## Visitability Features

Visitable homes have three accessibility features on the main floor:

1. No-step entrance (at the front, back or side of the house)
2. Wider doorways and hallways (minimum 36") on the main floor
3. Wheelchair accessible bathroom (minimum 5' turning radius)

Visitability does not mean fully accessible or universal design. It does not apply to the upper floors or basement.

## Advantages

- Easy access to the house and convenience in the house
- Aging in place
- Reduced risks of fall or injuries at home

- Convenience for everyone: people with mobility issues, those with young children in strollers, those carrying large or heavy items, furniture, or equipment
- Reduced costs for home renovations at a time of mobility changes
- Reduced need for costly personal care services
- Aesthetic appeal

## Costs

- When Visitability features are planned at the outset, additional costs are minimal.
- Additional costs for Visitability features vary from 0% to 5% of the total cost of building a home.
- Factors that affect the cost of building a Visitable home:
  - o Topography – land development for no-step entrance
  - o Basement plan (e.g., window wells, depth of basement, foundation walls)
  - o Floor plan
  - o Variations in prices between builders
  - o Local market conditions

## Related Facts

- Over 50% of falls that older adults suffer occur in their own home.
- One third of all Canadians aged 65 years or over have mobility problems.
- The vast majority of adults aged 55 or older (89%) want to age in in their own home.
- Seniors are less likely to move to an institution or care home when their homes are equipped with some accessibility features.
- Stairs are the leading cause of serious falls among community-living elderly, accounting for about one-third of all fatal falls.
- A common reason that seniors move from their home is their mobility problems.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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