

Guidelines for VisitAble Housing Measurements

VisitAble homes provide easy access on the main entrance level (in other words 'VisitAble floor') and create a welcoming environment for everyone.

VisitAble Homes have three essential accessibility features:

1. No-step entrance (at the front, back or side of the house)
2. Wider doorways and clear passage on the main floor
3. A main floor washroom (or powder room) that can be accessed by visitors who use mobility devices

The guidelines in this document address specifics mainly related to these three features. The guidelines provide minimum requirements and recommendations. Minimum requirements are critical to ensure the functionality and safety for everyone. Recommendations are key considerations that we propose to further improve functionality and safety and make homes truly VisitAble.

1. No-Step Entrance

VisitAble homes must have at least one no-step entrance. Whenever possible, a no-step entrance should be considered for the main entry to the dwelling unit. Where this is not possible, a no-step entrance may be made at the back or side of the house, or through an attached garage. The entrance needs to be accessible from a sidewalk, a driveway, or other public route.

Minimum Requirements

- The no-step entrance does not have a slope of greater than a ratio of 1:20, unless designed as a ramp. (A running slope between 1:20 and 1:12 is considered a ramp.)
- The no-step entrance has a level landing area of at least 1500mm x 1500mm (60" x 60").
- The width of the exterior route leading to a VisitAble unit entrance is 1100mm (43") or wider.

Disclaimer

The National Building Codes does not provide VisitAbility Standards. Therefore, we provide this information as a guideline or reference for homebuilders who are interested in building VisitAble homes. These guidelines are not meant to contradict any local, provincial, national/territorial building codes or zoning requirements applicable to existing dwellings or new construction. Please consult local building regulations.



Exterior slopes and ramps should not have sudden drop offs from the edges. Use cross slope, curbs, or heightened curbs or rails along the edges. Cross-slopes should not be steeper than 1:50.

Recommendations

- A covered landing area is extremely desirable. It not only provides shelter from rain or snow during the transition, but also helps prevent water leaking into the entrance door.

2. Doors and Hallways on VisitAble Floor

VisitAble homes are designed to allow visitors who use mobility devices to access the main living areas (e.g. washroom, living room, family room, kitchen, dining room) on the VisitAble floor.

Minimum Requirements

- Doors are at least 915mm (36") wide.
- Hallways are at least 1100mm (43") wide.
- The no-step entrance door and washroom door on the VisitAble floor have lever handles.



The VisitAble floor should have no level changes requiring steps.

Recommendations

- Lever handles are essential for some people. Lever handles add absolutely no cost. It is recommended that lever handles are installed for all doors on the VisitAble floor.

3. Washroom on VisitAble Floor

The washroom on the VisitAble floor will allow people who use mobility devices to access and use the facilities without requiring assistance.

Minimum Requirements

- The washroom on the VisitAble floor has at least one toilet and one sink.
- There is a diameter of at least 1500mm (60") of open floor space. This provides the turning radius required for most wheelchair users. This space can be overlapped by the open space under the wall-hung sink.
- At least one grab bar is installed to the side wall near the toilet. Grab bars help wheelchair users safely transfer their position. The side wall near the toilet has wall reinforcement with solid wood blocking, which supports the grab bar. The wall reinforcement is located between 460mm (18") and 1675mm (66") from the floor.
- The lavatory counter/sink is not higher than 860mm (34") from the floor and its depth is between 550mm and 650mm (22" – 25.5").
- The lavatory/sink has space underneath for the feet and legs of individuals who approach using wheelchairs. The free space is at least 735mm (29") high and 760mm (30") wide.
- Sink faucets should have lever handles.



To reduce burn hazards, pipes exposed under the lavatory counter/sink are insulated.

Recommendations

- When the toilet's centreline is distanced 460-480mm (18" – 19") from the side wall, it helps wheelchair users to better transfer.
- The top of the toilet seat is 430-480mm (16" – 19") in height.
- The toilet has a transfer space of at least 915mm (36") both at the side and in the front. This transfer space can be overlapped with the required open space for a turning radius.

Further Accessibility Considerations

- Lights switches should be no higher than 1200mm (47") from the floor.
- Electrical outlets should be installed 460 – 500mm (18" – 20") from the floor.
- To build a truly VisitAble home, consider a space on the VisitAble floor for overnight stay. The overnight space may be a couch, cot, small bed, or full bedroom.
- If the homeowner is interested in making an additional VisitAble floor, such as basement or 2nd floor, now or in the future, consider designing the dwelling in such a way that allows the future installation of platform lift system or residential elevator by incorporating stacked closets or another feature that can be used as an elevator shaft.