



Adaptable Housing

in Nova Scotia Building Code:
vs. Barrier-Free or Accessible:

Section 3.8.4

Section 3.8.3



An amendment to the NS Building Code regulations as of Sept. 1, 2019.
See <https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/bcregs.htm>

What is Adaptable Housing ?

During initial construction, preparation for changes are made to allow for future accessibility features. This means renovations are much **easier & cheaper** when the need arises.

The NS Building Code now requires that all "Residential dwelling units" (including multi-unit residential, single-family homes, townhouses, row-houses, duplexes and triplexes) be better suited to, and representative of, the needs and safety of our population.

For multi-unit residential, the compliance options are:

- 1) Provide **1 in 20** *barrier-free* or accessible units, **or**
- 2) have **all** units be *adaptable*, (comply with Subsection 3.8.4.)

Why Adaptable Housing?

- The **Seniors** population is projected to grow to over 25% of the population by 2030.
- **Disabilities** currently affect 1 in 5 directly and more indirectly, which is also increasing.
- Current housing is generally not accessible or “friendly” to anyone with disabilities.
- This is a **cost-effective** approach to improving accessibility in homes and 'Aging in Place'.
- Housing grants for renovations are in high demand and slow in delivery, yet often needed urgently.



Adaptable Kitchens have

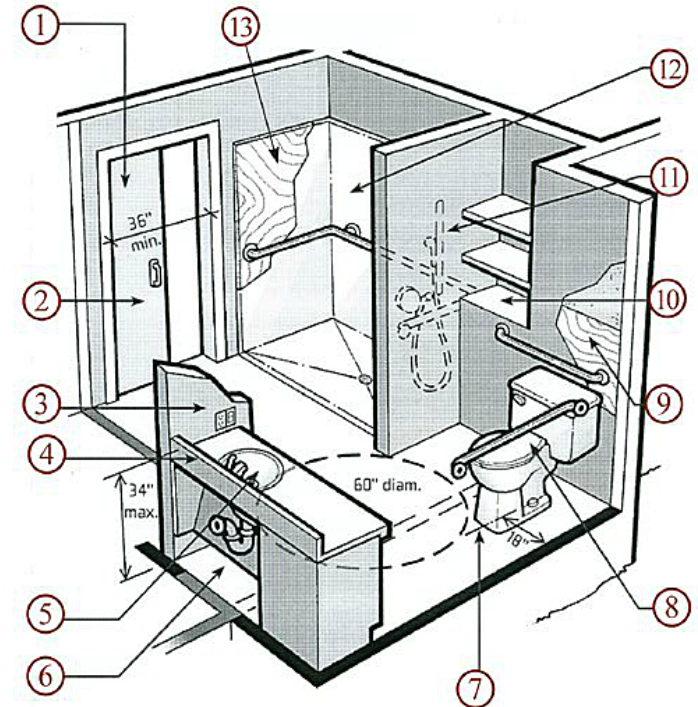
- Lower drain pipes to 305mm from floor to allow future lowering of sink for seated use;
- Lever-type faucets are much easier to use; or at least allow lever-type to be installed at a later date.
- An electrical rough-in shall be located below the counter top to allow for future installation of an accessible electrical outlet.(not applicable to duplex outlets over counters under cabinets).



Adaptable Bathrooms

- Trap arm for the sink drain to be no higher than 305 mm from floor.
- Faucets are required to be lever-type.
- Walls to have reinforcement (extra blocking or thick plywood) to allow grab bars to be installed around the toilet, bathtub and shower.
- Height of controls no higher than 1.2m
- Wheelchair turning radius of 1.5m

Also consider non-slip flooring, rounded surface edges and even an emergency call button or phone.



Adaptable House Entrances

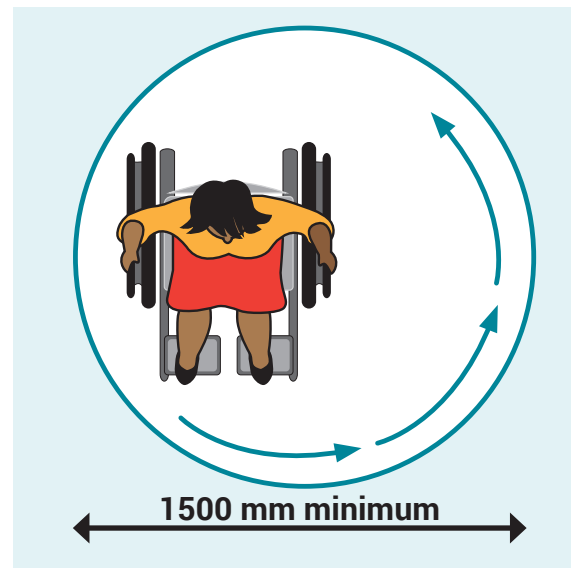
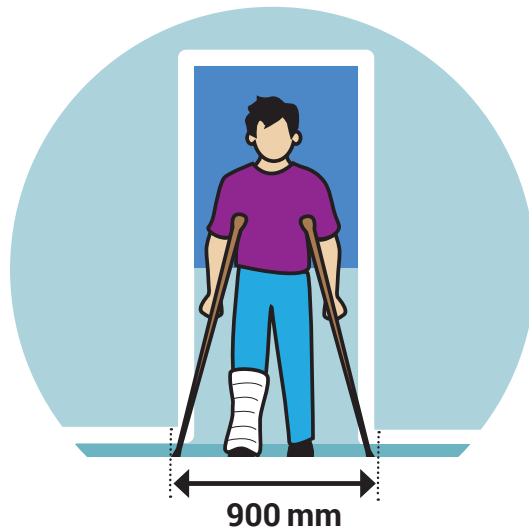
- At least one entry door (not necessarily the front) shall be 900 mm (3') wide with an easily opened handle, such as lever-type.
- Threshold complies with the barrier-free requirements, less than 13mm higher than the finished floor and bevelled.
- Access to the wide entry door can be made barrier-free, from a sidewalk or parking area, with space for a future ramp if needed.



Consider additional railings and lighting, low maintenance materials and landscaping.

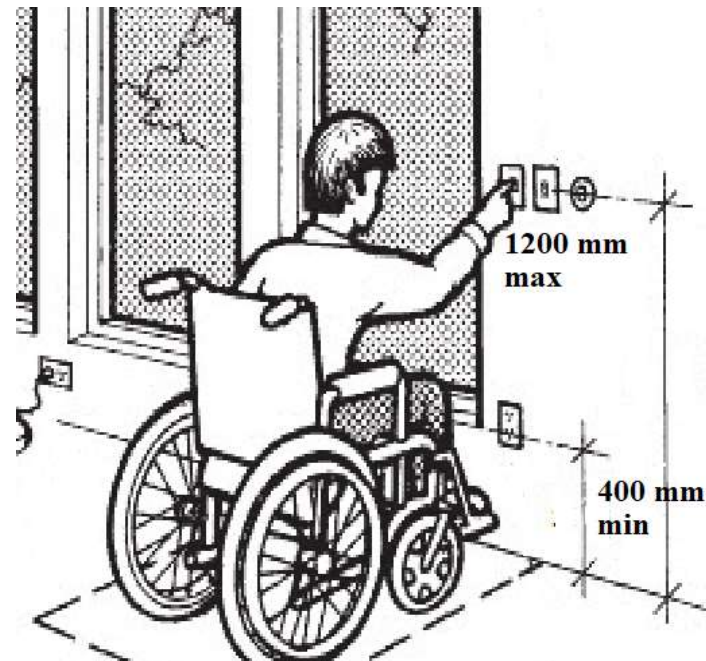
Adaptable House Interiors

- Interior doors or passageways shall be 900 mm wide
- Corridors shall also have a clear width of 900 mm
- Allow for a turning radius of a wheelchair of 1.5 m
- Door knobs are required to be barrier-free, such as lever-type, or are able to be installed later.



Adaptable House Controls

- operable with a closed fist
- mounted in an accessible range, 400 mm to 1,200 mm from finished floor
- include electrical outlets, light switches, thermostats, door knobs, cable or data outlets.
- Dedicated outlets, for specific appliances, are not required to meet these ranges



HEIGHT OF REACH OF PERSON
IN A WHEELCHAIR (in mm)



For more information on NS Building Code requirements as well as accessibility issues, please be in touch with Region of Queens Planning Department: phone 902-354-3455 or check the website for forms and email addresses.

<https://www.regionofqueens.com/municipal-services/planning>