

CITY OF ST. LOUIS
OFFICE ON THE DISABLED
GUIDELINES FOR ACCESSIBLE (TYPE A) &
ADAPTABLE (TYPE B) DWELLING UNITS

PURPOSE:

Requirements for accessible dwelling units are included in the City of St. Louis Building Code. This guideline has been compiled to assist design professionals, builders and developers to comply with accessibility requirements. This guideline is not intended to be a comprehensive compilation of all accessibility provisions that may be applicable to residential development. Buildings or facilities may be covered under the Fair Housing Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These buildings or facilities must also comply with any other applicable Federal requirements.

REFERENCED CODES & STANDARDS:

The City of St. Louis currently enforces the following codes:

1. **Building:** 2003 International Building Code
2. **Existing Building:** 2003 International Existing Building Code
3. **Residential:** 2003 International Residential Code
4. **Mechanical:** 2000 International Mechanical Code
5. **Fire Prevention:** 2005 International Fire Code
6. **Electrical:** 1999 National Electrical Code (NFPA 70)
7. **Plumbing:** 2003 Uniform Plumbing Code

Accessibility requirements for the Building Code are contained in Chapter 11 which references ICC/ANSI A117.1-1998 *Accessibility and Usable Buildings and Facilities*. These standards dictate the dimensions and characteristics for features like door widths, clear space for wheelchair mobility, audible and visual signals, grab bars, switch and outlet height.

Note: The Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) has determined that 2003 IBC and ANSI A117.1-1998 *Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities*, meets the minimum requirements of the Fair Housing Act.

DEFINITIONS:

Accessible: Describes a site, building, facility or portion thereof that complies with Chapter 11 of the 2003 International Building Code and ICC/ANSI A117.1-1998 *Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities*, and that can be approached, entered and used by a person with a physical disability.

Accessible Route: A continuous unobstructed path connecting all accessible elements and spaces in a building or facility which can be negotiated by a person with a severe disability, using a wheelchair and which is also safe for and useable by people with other disabilities. Interior accessible routes include corridors, floors, ramps, elevators, lifts and clear floor space at fixtures. Exterior accessible routes include parking, access aisles, curb ramps, walks, ramps and lifts.

Type A Dwelling Unit: A dwelling unit that is designed and constructed for accessibility in accordance with Chapter 11 of the 2003 International Building Code & Section 1002 of the ICC/ANSI A117.1-1998

SCOPE:

The goal of the Building code is to insure that residential buildings (existing, new and altered), including their associated sites and facilities shall be accessible to people with disabilities. Exceptions: (1) detached one and two family dwellings and their associated sites and facilities; (2) buildings of Group R-1 Use Group containing not more than five (5) sleeping units for rent or hire that are also occupied as the residence of the proprietor; & (3) a day care facility (Use Groups A-3, I-4, & R-3), in a part of a dwelling unit, only the portion of the structure utilized for the day care is required to be accessible.

These guidelines regulate sites, buildings and facilities, containing dwelling units in residential occupancies for the purpose of providing accessible dwelling units for people with disabilities. These guidelines address the application of the Building Code to: each building and occupancy type; new construction; maintenance, change of occupancy, additions and alterations of existing buildings; specific site and building elements and multiple elements or spaces provided within a site or building.

WHAT IS ACCESSIBLE HOUSING?

Accessible housing enables a person with a disability to live independently. For some people with disabilities, access may be as simple as adding grab bars and a tub seat in the bathroom. For wheelchair users, accessibility requires ramps, wider doorways, and clear floor space in the kitchen and bathroom and lowering counters.

For people with disabilities, especially those who use wheelchairs, walkers or other mobility aids, barriers frequently begin outside the home. The presence of even one or two steps makes an entry inaccessible. Once access is gained into a home, the next barrier is narrow doorways. Door knobs and locks are another consideration in accessibility. Standard round door knobs require grasping, twisting, or pressure is often unusable by people with disabilities.

Adequate turning space in hallways, kitchens and bathrooms is vital to accessibility. A clear floor space/turning radius must be available in kitchens and bathrooms to allow for full access to appliances and fixtures. In order to be accessible to people with disabilities, bathroom and kitchen fixtures must be at appropriate height.

Accessibility adaptations made to the bathroom are beneficial in the kitchens: removal of under-sink cabinets to allow wheelchair access; faucet control modification and anti-scald valves; adequate clear floor and turning space to access appliances and fixtures. Accessible closets can be achieved by providing sufficiently wide doors, clear floor and turning space and lowered rods and shelving.

Accessible laundry facilities must provide wide doorways, clear floor and turning space and appliances that can be used by a person with a disability, i.e., front-loading washers and dryers with easily operated, front-mounted controls.

WHAT IS ADAPTABLE HOUSING?

Adaptable housing allows for some features of dwelling units to meet the needs of a person with a disability. Essential design elements such as accessible entrances, wider doorways and hallways are included as integral features, while others are made to allow other features to be added as needed. To qualify as “adaptable”, it must be possible for changes to the unit to be made without “major construction”. This term generally means that the use of a skilled laborer is not necessary nor any change to the inherent structure or materials of the unit. For example, bathroom walls may be designed with additional blocking to allow for the insta

ACCESSIBLE TYPE A UNITS WHEN GRANTING PARTIAL OCCUPANCY

PURPOSE: to provide requirements for the provision of accessible Type A dwelling units, where required, when granting partial occupancies in for sale multi-family residential buildings where fifty percent (50%) of the units in the building are completed.

PROCESS: To request a partial occupancy, an accessible Type A unit must be completed in for sale multi-family residential buildings when fifty percent (50%) of the units are built out. This must be an accessible Type A dwelling that was designated on the approved building permit construction drawings or on an addendum. The unit must comply with ICC/ANSI A171.1-1998 Chapter 10: Dwelling Units, Section 1002, Type a Dwelling Units.

ADDENDUM: If the accessible Type A dwelling unit, on the original building permit construction drawings, is not built out in the location shown, the architect of record shall submit revised construction drawings indicating the location of the new accessible Type A dwelling units and details of accessible elements within the building as an addendum to the original building permit application. This addendum must be completed prior to the issuance of a partial occupancy.

Effective: January 30, 2001

Revised: April 18, 2001
June 20, 2003