

Is Your Home Accessible?



The ADA is the most comprehensive federal civil rights statute protecting the rights of people of disabilities. Signed into law by President George H.W. Bush in 1988, it affects access to places of public accommodation, such as businesses and transportation.

Under the ADA's Title III, all new commercial construction after July 1992 must comply with ADA guidelines. Because of those guidelines, restaurants, hotels, and stores are now more accessible.

While they do not extend to private homes, ADA guidelines can act as an accessibility yardstick. The following checklist is based on ADA guidelines- **how does your home measure up?**

Ramps & Slopes

- Does the ramp rise no more than 1" per foot? (Example: A ramp that rises vertically 7" should be at least 7 feet long)
- Are ramps at least 36" wide between the 2 handrails to allow for convenient wheelchair travel?
- Do interior ramps have top, middle and bottom landing that are level and at least 60" long to allow for adequate maneuvering and resting space?
- If the ramp is more than 30" long, is there a middle landing that is level and at least as wide as the ramp?
- Does the door to each accessible space have at least 18" of clear floor space on the latch side for people who use wheelchairs, walkers and other mobility aids to approach and pull open?
- Is the hardware required for an accessible door mounted no higher than 48" above the finished floor?
- If a door has a closer, is the sweep period of the closer adjusted so that from an open position of 70 degrees, the door takes at least three seconds to move to a point of 3" from the latch?

Parking & Loading Zones

- Does the garage allow for at least 98" of vertical clearance for vehicles with raised roofs to approach, use and exit the accessible parking space?
- Are the level surfaces of accessible parking spaces and access aisles free of built-up curb ramps so people can make convenient transfers?

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Hallways & Doors

- Is the doorway leading to accessible spaces at least 32" wide?
- Are hallways free of steps or abrupt vertical changes?
- Does at least one door to each accessible space have door hardware (levers, pulls, panic bars, etc.) usable with one hand, without tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist?

Bathrooms

- Does each accessible toilet have a horizontal grab bar on the adjacent side wall at least 40" long and between 33" and 36" above the floor for stabilization and assistance during transfer from a wheelchair?
- Is the toilet seat between 17" and 19" above the floor?
- Is the accessible toilet centered 18" from the adjacent side of a wall at least 42" long? Is the toilet mounted 33" to 36" above the floor for stabilization and assistance during transfer from a wheelchair?
- Does the sink have at least 29" of clearance under the front edge to allow wheelchair users to pull under the sink and use the faucet?
- Is there a faucet that is easily operable with hardware that is usable with one hand without tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist?

Bathrooms (Cont.)

- Is there enough room for a wheelchair user to turn around (either in a 60" diameter circle or in a T-shaped turn)?
- Is there clear space of at least 30" by 48" in front of a sink to allow forward approach?
- Are sinks mounted with the rim or counter surface no higher than 34" above the floor?
- Is there a shower spray unit with a hose that is at least 60" long and that can be used both as a fixed shower head and as a handheld shower?
- Do roll-in showers have a securely fastened folding seat 17 - 19" above the floor for people who use wheelchairs to transfer onto?
- Are the faucet controls and shower wand positioned on the wall along the side of the shower seat so they are operable from the folding shower seat or from the shower wheelchair?
- Are the roll-in showers free of doors that would impede wheelchair transfer onto the seat?
- Are the roll-in showers free of curbs or lips at the shower floor that would impede wheelchair approach and transfer onto the folding shower seat?
- Are tub faucet controls positioned between the center of the end wall and open side of tub so people can approach and adjust controls before they transfer onto the tub seat to bathe?

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Bathrooms (Cont.)

- Is there a securely attached tub seat for persons who cannot stand in the tub?
- Along the side of the tub, are there two horizontal grab bars at least 24" long for stabilization and to aid in transfers from a wheelchair?
- Is the gap between the wall and the inside face of each grab bar exactly 1.5" to accommodate people who rest their forearms on the bars for stabilization, but so the arm cannot accidentally pass between the grab bar and wall, especially if a fall occurs?
- Does the medicine cabinet have a usable shelf located no higher than 44" above the floor space?

Bedrooms

- Is the security latch or bolt on the door mounted no higher than 48" above the floor so it is within the reach of people who use wheelchairs, and is it operable with one hand, without tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist?
- Is there at least a 36" wide route on each side of the bed and at the foot of the bed to allow people who use wheelchairs to transfer onto the bed from either side?
- Are drapery wands, controls on fixed lamps, and thermostat controls within 54" of the floor for side approach or within 48" of the floor for forward approach for people who use wheelchairs?
- Are drapery wands, controls on fixed lamps, and thermostat controls easily operable with one hand?
- Are the rods and shelves in the closet within 54" of the floor for side approach or 48" of the floor for forward approach for people in wheelchairs?

LiveWell is the trusted aging in place expert in Metro Houston. We not only provide mobility equipment, but also expertise in home remodeling, ADA, and universal design standards to truly transform the homes of seniors.

LiveWell's team of technicians are trusted craftsman that provide quality home modifications that improve safety and accessibility and allow seniors to remain independent.