
Fair Housing Accessibility/Design and Construction

Fair Housing Laws

Fair housing laws protect citizens against housing discrimination based on **race, color, national origin, sex, handicapping condition, religion, and family status**. In multifamily housing, the Fair Housing Act has a specific set of requirements regarding the accessibility of dwelling units. In order to be in compliance, the following accessibility requirements must be met:

Requirement 1. An accessible building entrance on an accessible route. All covered multifamily dwellings must have at least one accessible building entrance on an accessible route unless it is impractical to do so because of the terrain or unusual characteristics of the site.

- An accessible route means a continuous, unobstructed path connecting accessible elements and spaces within a building or site that can be navigated by a person with a disability who uses a wheelchair, and that is also safe for and usable by people with other disabilities.
- An accessible entrance is a building entrance connected by an accessible route to public transit stops, accessible parking and passenger loading zones, or public streets and sidewalks.

Requirement 2. Accessible public and common use areas. Covered housing must have accessible and usable public and common-use areas. Public and common-use areas cover all parts of the housing outside individual units. For example, they include building-wide fire alarms, parking lots, storage areas, indoor and outdoor recreational areas, lobbies, mailrooms and mailboxes, and laundry areas.

Requirement 3. Usable doors (usable by a person in a wheelchair). All doors that allow passage into and within all premises must be wide enough to allow passage by persons using wheelchairs.

Requirement 4. Accessible route into and through the dwelling unit. There must be an accessible route into and through each covered unit.

Requirement 5. Light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls in accessible locations. Light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls must be in accessible



locations.

Requirement 6. Reinforced walls in bathrooms for later installation of grab bars.

Reinforcements in bathroom walls must be installed, so that grab bars can be added when needed. The law does not require installation of grab bars in bathrooms.

Requirement 7. Usable kitchens and bathrooms. Kitchens and bathrooms must be usable, meaning they must be designed and constructed so an individual in a wheelchair can maneuver in the space provided.

Questions?

For more information about Fair Housing Accessibility/Design and Construction requirements, contact the North Carolina Human Relations Commission at:

NC Human Relations Commission

1318 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27601

or

919-807-4420

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