

Chapter 14: General Regulations
Article 5: Building Regulations
Division 6: Universal Design for One and Two-family Residential Dwellings

§145.0601 Purpose

The purpose of this division is to promote the voluntary incorporation of universal design and visitability standards within residential building projects that are otherwise exempt from compliance with California requirements for accessibility to persons with disabilities. Compliance with the design standards in this Division will make specified dwelling units visitable, more usable, and safer for occupancy and visitability by persons with disabilities or frailties. The regulations are intended to provide development incentives which will facilitate the introduction of access for persons with disabilities in residential housing projects that would be otherwise exempt from compliance under state and federal law.

§145.0602 Definitions.

For the purpose of this division, the following terms shall have the following definitions. Terms not defined shall be as is defined in the prevailing edition of California Building Code:

CBC, Chapter 11A: Chapter 11A of the California Building Code (located in Part 2, Title 24, California Code of Regulations), or its successor provisions.

Primary Entry: The principal entrance through which most people enter a dwelling unit.

Residential Dwelling Unit: A dwelling unit for one household in a single-family dwelling, a duplex, or a triplex, without regard to type of ownership or use, and including townhouses.

Townhouse: Means the same as “multistory dwelling unit” and is a dwelling unit with finished living space on one floor and the floor immediately above or below it or, if applicable, the floors immediately above or below it.

§145.0603 Scope and Application.

The standards in this Division shall apply to newly constructed dwellings or dwelling units. With the exception of projects incorporating Townhouse dwelling units, this Division shall not apply to any residential dwelling unit subject to and in compliance with the accessibility regulations in the prevailing edition of Chapter 11A of the California Building Code.

The standards in this Division are divided into two levels of design where varying levels of adaptability, visitability or accessibility are required in exchange for the granting of development incentives. Applicants may choose to comply with one of the following two tiers of compliance.

- a) Design Tier I focuses on basic universal design and adaptability features. A development incentive for complying with the design standards in the Tier I provisions would make a project or development eligible for processing through the Affordable/In-fill Housing and Sustainable Buildings Expedite Program authorized by Council Policy 600-2.
- b) Design Tier II focuses on compliance with the accessibility/adaptability requirements of Ch. 11A of the California Building Code. Tier II will qualify a project for varying levels of density or FAR bonuses based on the scope and level of access provided throughout a project or development.

Detailed installation or design requirements not specifically detailed herein shall be as is required in the prevailing edition of the California Building Code, however more specific design standards in this Division shall supersede the relevant standard in said code.

§145.0604 Design Tier I Projects and Developments.

Housing projects or developments where at least 50% of dwellings or dwelling units within a development, or within a phase in a development, comply with the list of Universal Design standards in Section §145.0605 shall be eligible for development incentives under Design Tier 1.

As a development incentive, projects complying with the design and construction standards in Design Tier 1 shall be processed through the Affordable/In-fill Housing and Sustainable Buildings Expedite Program.

§145.0605 Design Tier I Construction Standards.

- a) **Exterior route of travel.** One exterior accessible route of travel that can be negotiated by a person using a wheelchair shall be provided and shall connect the primary accessible or adaptable entrance to a driveway or sidewalk such that the units with universal design can be entered.
 - i. The exterior route of travel shall have a width of not less than thirty nine inches (39”) and shall be provided between an arrival point, which may be from a sidewalk or driveway, and the adaptable or accessible entrance.
 - ii. The maximum slope of the exterior accessible route shall not exceed one (1) unit vertical in twelve (12) units horizontal.
- b) **Dwelling or Dwelling Unit Entrance:** At least one entrance to the primary level of every dwelling or dwelling unit complying with Design tier 1 shall comply with the following accessibility and adaptability standards.

- i. **Accessible entrance:** The primary entrance to 20% of the universally designed dwellings or dwelling units shall be accessible to persons with disabilities and shall include a level floor or landing on each side of the entry door. At the primary entry door to dwellings or dwelling units, with direct exterior access, outside landing surfaces constructed of impervious materials such as concrete, brick or flagstone, shall be no more than 3/4 inch (12.7 mm) below the floor level of the interior of the dwelling unit immediately adjacent to the primary entry door.
 - ii. **Adaptable entrance:** The primary entrance to the remaining 80% of universally designed dwellings or dwelling units shall include at least one entrance whose exterior landing includes a maximum 4-inch step to the interior landing or floor. The adaptable entrance shall be designed to include a clear floor space on the exterior side of the door to accommodate a future ramp. Ramps shall be assumed to have a slope in the path of travel of 1-foot (305 mm) rise in 12 feet (3658 mm) of horizontal run (8.3% gradient). Landings at the top and bottom of the ramp shall be assumed to have a length of 48 inches in the path of travel.
 - iii. Entry doors at adaptable or accessible entrances shall have a minimum net clear opening width of thirty-two inches (32"), measured between the face of the door, and the stop, when the door is in the ninety-degree (90) open position.
 - iv. The floor or landing shall not be more than 3/4 inch (12.7 mm) lower than the threshold of the doorway. Thresholds with a height greater than one-quarter inch (1/4") shall be beveled with a slope not to exceed one (1) unit vertical by two (2) units horizontal.
- c) **Interior routes of travel.** Not less than one interior path of travel that is at least 39 inches wide shall be provided and shall connect the adaptable or accessible entrance to a powder room or bathroom, to one bedroom or den, to a common use room such as a living room or family room, and, if provided on the primary entry level, to the kitchen.
- i. When hand activated door hardware is provided at doors providing access between the interior route of travel and served rooms, hand-activated door-opening hardware shall be centered between 30 inches (762 mm) and 44 inches (1118 mm) above the floor. Latching and locking doors that are hand-activated and that are in a path of travel shall be operable with a single effort by lever-type hardware.
 - ii. The route of travel may be reduced to 36 inches in width when door openings and entryways into rooms served by the interior route of travel have a net clear opening width of not less than 36 inches.
- c) **Universal Design Kitchen:** Kitchens designed to provide access to persons with physical disabilities and located on the primary entry level may be designed to incorporate universal design features as follow. The standards to follow are optional:
- i. The interior route of travel shall provide access to the kitchen area.

- ii. A clear floor space at least 30 inches by 48 inches (762 mm by 1219 mm) shall be provided to allow a parallel approach by a person in a wheelchair at the range or cooktop and either a parallel or forward approach at the oven, dishwasher, refrigerator/freezer and trash compactor.
 - iii. A clear floor space at least 30 inches by 48 inches (762 mm by 1219 mm) shall be provided to allow a parallel approach by a person in a wheelchair at a kitchen sink.
 - iv. Kitchen sink faucet controls and operating mechanism shall be operable with one hand and shall not require tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist.
 - v. A minimum linear length of 30 inches (762 mm) of countertop shall be provided for the kitchen sink.
 - vi. A minimum linear length of 30 inches (762 mm) of countertop shall be provided for the kitchen sink.
- d) **Universal Design Bathroom or Powder Room:** One bathroom or powder room shall be provided on the primary level and shall satisfy the following requirements:
- i. Structural reinforcements for future grab bar installation shall be provided in walls adjacent to showers and bathtubs, and walls or floor adjacent to toilets, and shall be provided based on the standards in CBC Chapter 11A.
 - ii. Where the door swings into the bathroom, there shall be a clear space [approximately 30 inches by 48 inches (762 mm by 1219 mm)] within the room to position a wheelchair or other mobility aid clear of the path of the door as it is closed and to permit use of toilet and lavatory fixtures.
 - iii. There shall be a clear space 30 inches by 48 inches (762 mm by 1219 mm) for forward approach at the toilet and side approach at the lavatory. Maneuvering spaces may include any kneespace or toespace available below bathroom fixtures.
 - iv. Faucet controls and operation mechanisms shall be operable with one hand and shall not require tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist.
- e) All electrical switches, receptacle outlets and environmental controls located in areas and rooms other than kitchens and private garages shall be located no more than forty-eight inches (48") measured from the top of the outlet box nor less than fifteen inches (15") measured from the bottom of the outlet box to the level of the finished floor.

§145.0606 Design Tier II Projects and Developments.

- a) Housing projects or developments where at least 50% of dwellings or dwelling units within a development, or within a phase in a development, comply with the accessibility/adaptability requirements of the prevailing edition of the California Building Code for privately funded multi-family residential housing based on the limitations in Section §145.0607 shall be eligible for development incentives under Design Tier II.

As a development incentive, projects complying with the design and construction standards in Design Tier II shall be processed through the Affordable/In-fill Housing and Sustainable Buildings Expedite Program and shall be eligible for a minimum density or FAR Bonus of 10% (applied to the base density or base FAR of the site).

- b) Housing projects or developments where more than 50% of dwellings or dwelling units within a development, or within a phase in a development, comply with the accessibility requirements of the prevailing edition of the California Building Code for privately funded multi-family residential housing based on the limitations in Section §145.0607 shall be eligible for additional development incentives under Design Tier II.

As an additional development incentive such projects shall receive an additional 1% of density or FAR bonus for every additional 5% increase in the number of accessible units, up to a maximum allowable density or FAR bonus of 20%.

- c) The development incentives provided in this division shall be in addition to other density or FAR bonuses available through other regulations such as the Affordable Housing Density Bonus Regulations.

§145.0607 Design Tier II Construction Standards.

Projects designed to comply with the Tier II Design level shall comply with the requirements in the prevailing edition of the California Building Code for access and adaptability/adaptability in privately funded multifamily residential projects (Chapter 11A), with the following exception:

An accessible route of travel to private exterior balcony and patio areas shall not be provided when a clear floor space is provided within the balcony or patio area to accommodate a future ramp. The future ramp shall be assumed to be designed to the following geometric configuration:

- i. The future ramp shall be assumed to have a slope in the path of travel of 1-foot (305 mm) rise in 12 feet (3658 mm) of horizontal run (8.3% gradient) and to provide access between the lowered balcony or patio and the dwelling or dwelling unit.
- ii. Landings at the top of the ramp shall be assumed to have a length of 48 inches in the path of travel.
- iii. Landings are not required at the bottom ramps serving decks and balconies.