



## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Ideally, all seven Home for Life™ Essentials will be included on the main floor, eliminating the need to climb stairs to reach a bedroom, bathroom, or laundry area. If this is not possible, then please see the note below regarding stairs.

### 1. Entrance

A Home for Life™ will have one or both of the following options to enter the home:

- At least one zero-step entrance
- Provisions for the installation of a ramp or vertical platform lift in an attached garage
- It is recommended that BOTH options be integrated into the home's design.

A zero-step entrance will:

- Have a minimum 5' x 5' level exterior landing that is covered to divert water and snow
- Have a minimum 5' x 5' foyer inside the home
- Have a door with a minimum clearance of 34" when open. A 36" hinged (slab) door generally provides the clearance required.
- Have a minimum 24" clear space at the latch side of the door on the pull side and 12" of clear space on the latch side of the door on the push side
- Have a maximum ½" beveled threshold
- Be connected to a parking area by a walkway with a slope no greater than 1:20

Zero-step entries are NOT prohibited by municipalities as some may believe. However, they do require special attention to drainage and guarding against moisture penetration. In our northern climate, homeowners who use a mobility device such as a wheelchair or scooter may prefer to enter their home via a ramp or vertical lift installed in an attached garage rather than going outdoors to reach the front door, however, this is inconvenient for visitors.

Future installation of a platform lift requires:

- A double-car garage
- Space for a 5' x 5' level landing to be constructed in front of the door leading into the home
- An additional 5' x 5' level space beside, or in front of, the landing to install the lift
- A 12 amp dedicated circuit installed near the door
- A door leading into the house that is a minimum of 34" wide when open. A 36" hinged (slab) door generally provides the clearance required.
- A minimum 24" clear space at the latch side of the door on the pull side and 12" of clear space on the side of the door on the push side
- A maximum ½" beveled threshold in the doorway leading into the house

Future installation of a ramp inside a garage requires:

- A double-car garage
- Enough length to create a ramp with a slope that does not exceed 1:12
- Space for a 5' x 5' level landing to be constructed in front of the door leading into the home
- A door leading into the house that is a minimum of 34" wide when open. A 36" hinged (slab) door generally provides the clearance required.
- A minimum 24" clear space at the latch side of the door on the pull side and 12" of clear space on the side of the door on the push side
- A maximum ½" beveled threshold in the doorway leading into the house
- Ramp design must meet the requirements outlined in the Alberta Building Code.

A Home for Life™ does NOT allow for the provision for a ramp to be added to the front of a home. They are not aesthetically appealing, are costly to construct, are difficult to maintain, and decrease resale value of a home. They can also be an invitation to criminals who prey on the elderly and disabled.

Zero-step entries can be created by lowering the foundation, raising the ground to the front door, or doing a combination of both. An entrance is required where the floor level is no more than 30" above grade. Where this cannot be achieved, the preferred alternative is to create a sloping walk to a side door or back deck, combined with a vertical lift or ramp located in an attached garage.

Another method involves making the garage floor level with the inside door and making adjustments to properly vent vehicle exhaust.

#### Resources

Journal of Light Construction, September 2009,

<http://www.jlconline.com/aging-in-place/building-zero-step-entries.aspx>

Residential Rehabilitation, Remodeling and Universal Design (North Carolina State University College of Design), pp. 6-9 [http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/pubs\\_p/docs/residential\\_remodelinl.pdf](http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/pubs_p/docs/residential_remodelinl.pdf)

## 2. Kitchen

A minimum 60" diameter turning circle in the work area (in front of, or adjacent to, the sink, fridge, cooktop and oven)

- Waste pipe under the sink brought through the wall at 12" – 14" to the centre of the pipe from floor level.

This enables the homeowner to lower the sink without having to reroute plumbing.

Optional:

- At least one section of lowered countertop with no cabinetry (or removable cabinetry) below. Lowered sections of countertop will be:
  - between 30" and 32" high
  - a minimum of 30" wide
  - a minimum of 19" deep
- Removable cabinetry beneath the sink OR retractable cabinet doors with no toe kick
- All counters mounted between 32" and 34" from the floor
- Upper cabinetry hung no higher than 16" from the surface of the countertop, except where the Alberta Building Code states that they must be higher (e.g. around cooktops)
- Height adjustable kitchen cabinets. Various options are available on the market.
- A rear draining sink
- Electrical switches located in the side of cabinetry rather than at the back
- A counter cooktop with front or side controls
- A wall-mounted, side-opening oven with a heat-proof slide-out work surface beneath
- Flooring that runs under counters (to maintain a finished look if they are ever removed)

## 3. Bathroom

At least one full (3-piece) bathroom that can be reached without climbing stairs\* which contains:

- A 60" turning circle(s) in front of, or adjacent to, the toilet, sink and shower
- A minimum 34" of clear space between the edge of the toilet bowl and the nearest wall OR the option to

easily expand the bathroom without relocating plumbing

- Waste pipe under the sink brought in at 12" – 14" to the centre of the pipe from the floor. This enables the

homeowner to lower the sink without having to reroute the plumbing.

- A minimum 60" x 60" shower area with no threshold
- ¾" plywood sheeting installed around the toilet and shower according to the illustration below.

Plywood

sheeting provides the greatest amount of flexibility for positioning grab bars, should they be needed.

- Minimum ¾" plywood is required to support the weight of the average user.

Optional:

- A turning circle that will not impede the user's ability to close the door. A pocket door or outward swinging door may be required in smaller rooms. The turning circle may extend into the shower area but is not ideal.
- Removable cabinetry beneath the sink OR retractable cabinet doors with no toe kick
- Flooring run under the sink to maintain a finished look should cabinets need to be removed
- Toilet located next to a full-length wall

#### 4. Bedroom

At least one minimum 11' x 14' bedroom that can be accessed without climbing stairs\* and has a minimum 60" turning circle on one side of the bed. The turning circle will be connected to the doorway via a minimum 42" wide path of travel.

\* accessible by chair lift or elevator if required

Optional:

- A turning circle that will not impede the user's ability to close the door. A pocket door or outward swinging door may be required in smaller rooms.
- A minimum 60" turning circle in front of dressers and cabinets
- An opening, or option for an opening, to a three-piece bathroom (meeting the requirements in Feature #8). This enables the homeowner to install a ceiling mounted track lift between the bed and the bathing area if/when required.

#### 5. Laundry Room

A Home for Life™ will have one or more of the following options:

- A laundry area that can be reached without climbing stairs\* which contains a minimum 60" turning circle in front of, or adjacent to the laundry appliances
- An area that can be reached without climbing stairs\* where the plumbing and electrical has been roughed in for easy conversion to a laundry area that will provide a minimum 60" turning circle in front of, or adjacent to the laundry appliances

\* accessible by chair lift or elevator if required

#### 6. Hallways

- A minimum 42" wide clear path of travel throughout the interior of the home. This includes hallways as well as the space available to pass between immovable objects, such as kitchen islands and cabinetry.
- Maximum ¼" beveled thresholds or transition pieces

## 7. Doors

The following applies to interior doors.

- A minimum 34" clear opening when the door is open on ALL interior doors in the home. A 36" hinged (slab)

door generally provides the clearance required.

- A maximum ¼" beveled threshold on all interior doorways

Optional:

- A clear space of at least 24" at the latch side of the door on the pull side and 12" on the push side of all interior doors