



BUILDING STANDARDS ADVISORY

Subject Barrier-Free Requirements in Residential Occupancies	Approved by <i>Margaret Kuzylek</i>	Advisory Number A-12 1 of 2
	Effective Date September 1996	NBC 1995 References(s) 3.8. & 9.5.2.

Compliance with *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act* (the UBAS Act) and regulations is addressed in this advisory. NBC 1995 means the National Building Code of Canada 1995 as adopted by regulations under the UBAS Act. Words in italics, other than Act titles, are defined in the NBC 1995.

The UBAS regulations amend the NBC 1995 by adding the following:

3.8.1.6. Residential Occupancies. Notwithstanding Clause 3.8.2.3.(2)(a), in a *building of residential occupancy*, except where *dwelling units* are intended to be individually controlled by separate owners, at least the greater of

- (a) one, or
- (b) 5%

of the *dwelling units* shall be *barrier-free* in conformance with Article 3.8.3.17. (See Article 9.5.2.3.)

3.8.2.3.2) A washroom need not conform to the requirements of Sentence (1) provided

- a) it is located within a *suite of residential occupancy* except as required in Article 3.8.1.6.,

3.8.3.17. Residential Occupancies

1) Except as provided in this Article, *suites* within a *residential occupancy* which are required to be *barrier-free* shall conform to the applicable requirements of this Section.

2) In washrooms there shall be

- a) a floor space of at least 1 500 mm by 1 500 mm with no encroachment other than the water closet,
- b) a door that
 - i) swings outward, unless sufficient room is provided within the washroom to permit the door to be closed without interfering with a wheelchair,
 - ii) slides, or
 - iii) is a solid folding door,
- c) a water closet that conforms to Clauses 3.8.3.8.(1)(c) and (d) and Article 3.8.3.9.,
- d) a lavatory that conforms to Article 3.8.3.11.,
- e) where a bathtub is provided, a bathtub equipped with
 - i) faucet handles of the lever type without spring loading,
 - ii) a pressure equalizing valve or an automatic thermostatic mixing valve controlled by a lever or other device operable with a closed fist from the seated position,
 - iii) a recessed soap holder that is within reach of a person in a seated position,
 - iv) an integral slip resistant bottom,
 - v) grab bars that have
 - A) a horizontal section not less than 900 mm in length mounted on the back wall not less than 150 mm nor more than 300 mm above the rim of the bathtub, and
 - B) a vertical section continued from the horizontal section to rise not less than 600 mm from the horizontal section and located not less than 275 mm nor more than 325 mm from the end of the bathtub at which the controls are located, and
 - vi) where a shower is provided, a shower equipped
 - A) without shower doors,
 - B) with a hand-held shower head with not less than 1 500 mm of flexible hose, located adjacent to the faucets and controls so that it can be reached from the seated position and equipped with a support so that it can operate as a fixed shower head.

3) In kitchens there shall be

- a) a clearance of not less than 1 500 mm between counters and all opposing base cabinets, countertops, appliances or walls, and
- b) a clear turning circle of not less than 1 500 mm in diameter below countertop height.



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- 4) In sleeping rooms there shall be a clear turning circle of not less than 1 500 mm in diameter on one side of the bed.
- 5) Balconies shall be *barrier-free* and shall conform to the size requirements of Clause 3.3.1.7.(5).
- 6) Kitchen sinks, laundry sinks and other types of sinks shall have
 - a) faucet handles of the lever type without spring loading,
 - b) no sharp edges or rough corners, and
 - c) all exposed pipes 1 200 mm or less above the floor insulated or otherwise protected where they may constitute a burn hazard.

The purpose of this addition to the NBC 1995 is to provide that *buildings of residential occupancy*, including hotels, apartments, and dormitories, have at least a small percentage of the *suites barrier-free*. The NBC 1995 requires that doors to all the *suites* have a minimum width of 810 mm and that the door to at least one bathroom off a 860 mm wide hallway within the *suite* has a minimum width of 760 mm. However, no requirements or standards are set for other *barrier-free* features within the *suites*.

Buildings of residential occupancy where *suites* are intended for individual ownership are not subject to the requirement that a percentage of the *suites* be *barrier-free*. This exception applies to condominium ownership arrangements.

It should be noted that many *buildings of residential occupancy* that fall within the scope of Part 9 of the NBC 1995 are exempt from the requirement for including *barrier-free suites*. Article 3.8.1.1. exempts houses, including semi-detached houses, duplexes, triplexes, town houses, row houses and boarding houses. In addition, Article 9.5.2.3. exempts all but the entrance level of an apartment *building* if the *building* is not equipped with an elevator and the difference in floor elevation between the entrance level and every *dwelling unit* exceeds 600 mm.