

# Hallways and Doorways – Wheelchair Accessibility

## ADA and Specially Adapted Housing

We were recently asked this question: **"What does it take to make sure a new home plan will have wide enough hallways and doorways for a wheelchair?"**

This is a great question to ask before you start building your new home. Some homebuyers ask this question because a family member currently needs wheelchair accessibility. Some are buying a home for their retirement and want to include some **"aging in place" features**, like wider doorways that will be able to accommodate a scooter or wheelchair in the years ahead if needed.

Both ADA requirements and Specially Adapted Housing Minimum Property Requirements specify a **minimum hallway width of 48"**, with a **minimum doorway width of 36"** to allow full wheelchair accessibility.

Standard doorways in a new home are usually either 2'4", 2'6" or 2'8" wide, and according to North Carolina building code, the minimum width of a hallway is 36".

How wide should the doorways and hallways be in your home? Depends on what kind of access you're looking for.



- **Minimum clear width for a wheelchair is 36 inches** for a hall and 32 inches for a door.
- Minimum clear space for a T-shaped turn of 180 degrees is 36 inches in all directions.
- The minimum passage width for one wheelchair and one ambulatory person is 48 inches.
- Many mobility scooters are as narrow as 21".

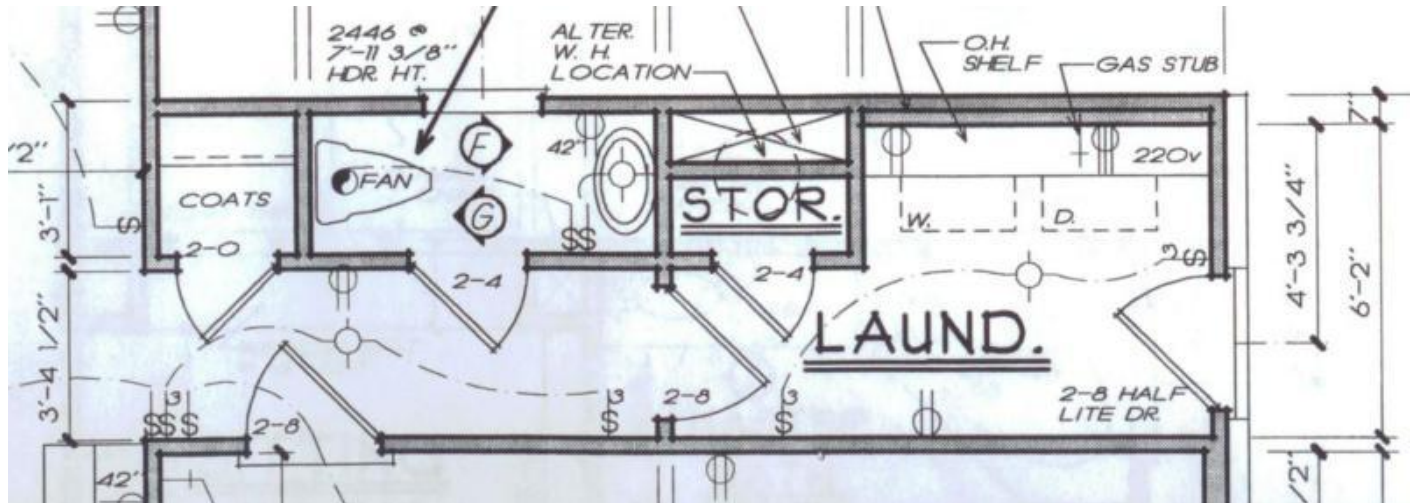
If the buyers simply want **wider doorways**, but are not as concerned about having a 48" wide hallway, there may be some options that don't require significant structural changes. And it's **MUCH less expensive to plan for wider doorways before construction starts** than to try to retrofit hallways and doorways later.

A 3'2" wide hallway will allow a 36" door, but there will be no room for trim - this isn't ideal.

A 3'8" width works well for a 36" door, and allows 2 1/4" trim, or casing, around the doorway.

A 3'10" width is ideal for a 36" door, as it allows 3 1/4" casing around the doorway.

However, if someone is planning to build with a **Specially Adapted Housing Grant**, they are **required to include 48" hallways**, whether they feel they are needed or not. Not only that, there must be enough space to "allow for maneuverability through the hall and into all rooms, including bedrooms, bathrooms, and ingress/egress routes".



Above is an example of a portion of a floor plan that we can adapt to fit requirements. The architect's blueprint for this hallway is currently 3'<sup>7</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" wide, which won't accommodate a 36" door with casing - and the powder room is too narrow for a wheelchair to enter.

In most cases, wider hallways means **adding more square footage to the home**, but we are usually able to make these additions at a very minimum cost. Here we would need to expand both the hallway and the powder room itself - which is a possibility in this case, as the upper wall is an exterior wall.

Each plan is different. The fewer changes that need to be made to the plan, the more cost effective those changes will be. At Stanton Homes, we are able to make almost all changes in house, which can reduce the cost of making a new home wheelchair accessible.

Ask your builder if they can make your new home wheelchair accessible, or if changing doors to a 36" width is a possibility.

Or bring us any plans that you're considering, and we'll be happy to recommend which plan will fit your needs best and be most cost effective, and let you know what changes might be required.

### **Stanton Homes - Building Exceptional Living Experiences**



Stanton Homes offers "[Meet the Builder](#)" events, where any potential homebuyer can bring floor plans and ask an experienced, knowledgeable general contractor a variety of questions.

This question regarding wheelchair accessibility was brought up at a recent Raleigh new homes event. Feel free to attend our next "[Meet the Builder](#)" event, or we can meet with you on an individual basis to discuss your home building project.

And if you're a veteran, active duty, or retired military, ask about "[Stanton Homes for Heroes](#)" - [Military Discounts on New Homes](#).



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