



Summary of Standard

CAN/ASC-2.8 - Accessible Ready Housing



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Introduction to the accessible-ready housing standard

Accessible-ready housing is designed for easy adaptation with minimal changes to its structure, electrical, or mechanical systems.

This Standard outlines a framework for accessible-ready housing, easily adaptable with minimal alterations. It incorporates legal, technical, and research sources, providing guidelines for various housing elements. The Standard emphasizes "Design for Accessible-Ready" (DAR), a proactive approach anticipating future accessibility needs, ensuring homes can be easily modified to meet emerging requirements.

The Accessible-Ready Housing Standard aligns with the National Standard of Canada known as [CSA/ASC B652 Accessible Dwellings](#) and incorporates the **DAR** approach.

The Standard covers accessibility in the following areas:

- entrances;
- parking;
- common areas;
- interior paths;
- kitchens;
- bathrooms; and
- emergency features.

The aim is to build homes that can be modified to meet future accessibility requirements with minimal structural changes. This standard makes housing accessible, **functional and adaptable**.

Comprehensive coverage: All aspects of residential design, including finishes, lighting, controls, and emergency provisions, are aligned to accessibility needs.

Scope and limitations

This document covers residential units and addresses potential barriers in accessible-ready housing. It focuses on:

- common areas;
- exterior spaces;
- parking;
- interior spaces (like kitchens and bathrooms);
- circulation;
- operating controls;
- stairs;
- vertical travel;
- doors;
- structural elements;
- carports;
- garages; and
- emergency features.

Application of the standard

A dwelling unit, also known as a housing unit, house, or home, is a living space designed for one or more individuals. It includes essential spaces like areas for cooking, eating, living, sleeping, and bathroom functions.

This Standard emphasizes identifying potential barriers in housing. It highlights components of living spaces, like common areas and exterior spaces, parking facilities, and interior spaces like kitchens and bathrooms.

Design for Accessible-Ready: Design requirements included in plans but not yet built, meant to allow for easy future adaptation to accessibility needs. The DAR approach allows for easy modifications in future.

Structural adaptability: This Standard encourages reinforcement and design that supports future modifications, like installing lifts or adjusting walls.

- Interior load-bearing structures must use columns and beams with adequate spans.
- Walls that include a DAR feature must be reinforced to support future modification. Structural drawings must include details about the reinforcement material, location, connection, and load capacity.
- For future installations of lifts, the design of floor shafts or openings must include a plug capable of supporting the full load of the floor. Drawings must provide details of the opening, plug, connections, and removal method.

Building envelope around independent carports and garages

The integrity of the building's thermal resistance, air barrier system, and vapour diffusion resistance is critical when removing a carport or garage. It is essential that the air barrier system remains **independent and continuous**. Compatibility between the protection planes is crucial, allowing installation without need to refinish existing cladding. Face seal systems must be designed to avoid weak joints and require ongoing maintenance to ensure effectiveness.

Outside the dwelling

Entrances

Doors must:

- meet CSA/ASC B652 requirements for opening width; and
- be replaceable with accessible doors as defined in CSA/ASC B652.

The main entrance must be at ground-level with a low threshold. Or there must be a path or ramp leading up to this entrance that meets the guidelines in CSA/ASC B652.

Exterior amenities

Exterior amenities should have access paths with ramps that meet the requirements in CSA/ASC B652. On DAR plans, pathways should avoid the need for significant modifications to building systems.

Exterior paths of travel

Any landscaping that could obstruct, overflow, or fall onto the accessible-ready features must be:

- integrated into the future accessible feature; or
- be removable using ordinary hand tools without requiring a permit.

The design and construction of exterior stairs should meet local building codes and the Stairs Section of this Standard.

The DAR alternative must be used to design accessible paths in advance, avoiding major building modifications for future accessibility.

Outdoor areas like balconies and backyards must have accessible or accessible-ready paths. DAR plans make future changes possible, even if the ground is uneven or the house has steps leading down.

Parking, garages, carports

Parking areas and garages must be accessible through standard designs or allow for flexible future adaptations for accessibility.

Parking and garages

Where there is a driveway and garage, either a path, a lift or a ramp shall be provided to facilitate access to the home from the main entrance and garage entrance. These should be designed in accordance with:

- the CSA/ASC B652 standard; or
- DAR plans that allow changes without major modifications to building systems.

For shared parking areas, assigned and accessible parking spaces or garages meeting CSA/ASC B652 must be provided.

Accessible parking garages or carports must:

- have adequate parking space (i.e. driveway) leading up to the carport, or
- meet the requirements of CSA/ASC B652, or
- follow DAR when it is designed and constructed so its removal is practical.

Inside the dwelling

Rooms

Accessible-ready houses must have at least one bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, and laundry room that must be accessible or accessible-ready.

Interior spaces: Key areas like bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, and laundry rooms must be accessible or easily adapted for accessibility.

Bedroom area requirements: Bedroom floor area, floors, and lighting must follow CSA/ASC B652 requirements. DAR plans should meet these requirements without requiring major changes to the house systems.

Bathrooms and kitchens: These spaces must include fixtures and features that meet accessibility standards or are designed for easy future adaptation.

Bathrooms

There must be at least one accessible-ready bathroom. The accessible-ready bathroom must meet the requirements set by CSA/ASC B652 across various elements to ensure ease of use and future adaptability.

Storage solutions must meet standards or be designed for removal without significant modifications so that the bathroom is both accessible and adaptable for future needs.

Wall reinforcement is required for the installation of grab bars and fixture adjustments.

Lighting should accommodate different preferences while complying with the standards.

The **electrical system** must meet CSA/ASC B652 or include provisions for future installation of GFCI receptacles which are Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters.

Fixtures should be replaceable to meet colour contrast requirements.

Toilets and accessories must meet the standards or be adaptable without significant structural changes.

Grab bars must meet the standards.

Sinks, vanities, showers, and bathtubs must meet the standards or be easily adaptable.

Medicine cabinets must meet the standards or be adaptable without major alterations to the home.

Other spaces

These areas must meet CSA/ASC B652 requirements. DAR plans should meet these requirements without major changes to the house systems such as:

- Laundry
- Closets
- Service rooms and spaces
- Floor and ground surface finishes
- Wall finishes

Kitchens must meet CSA/ASC B652 requirement for floor areas, doors, floors, walls, lighting, electrical, counters, sink, storage, and appliances.

Doors

Doors and manoeuvring areas: The design of the doorway must provide a clear, level, and unobstructed maneuvering area. To achieve this, doorways must be designed to account for the space required on each side of a door and the width of the path of travel serving the door. The design should allow this manoeuvring area to be constructed without significant changes to the house systems.

The standard has separate requirements for:

- two doors in a row;
- door thresholds;
- door handles;
- opening force;
- power-assisted doors;
- door viewers; and
- door vision panels and side lights

Area allowances

These guidelines permit modifications for accessibility that can be made efficiently and without extensive structural adjustments.

Clear floor spaces must be adequate for stationary positions for turning diameter and T-turns. DAR plans must meet these criteria without significant alterations to the house systems.

Counters and work surfaces should be installed so that they can be removed or replaced without major changes to the house systems.

Operating controls

Operating controls include door:

- handles and locks;
- window and operators and locks;
- faucets and adjustable shower heads;
- thermostats,
- appliances;
- doorbells,
- intercoms;
- electrical receptacles;
- electrical panels; and
- activation devices.

This ensures accessibility and compliance with established standards, facilitating ease of use and adaptation for various needs.

Controls in living spaces must be positioned with adequate and clear floor area that meets height requirements or must allow relocation without rewiring. **Controls must be accessible from a forward or side approach or allow for relocation without rewiring.**

All controls, devices, and visual displays must be replaceable with alternatives meeting the CSA/ASC B652 standards without the need for additional work or repairs.

Illumination: Controls that require reading must be replaceable with those meeting CSA/ASC B652 for illumination without added work or repairs.

Colour contrast: Controls must be replaceable with those meeting CSA/ASC B652 for colour contrast without added work or repairs, or the background must be paintable to meet these requirements.

Lighting

General (ambient) lighting must be replaceable with built-in fixtures that meet CSA/ASC B652 without needing modifications to building systems.

Task lighting must be replaceable and adjustable for fixtures that meet CSA/ASC B652 without needing modifications to building systems.

Stairs

Stairs must meet specific design standards for safety and accessibility. Stairs must be designed to support handrails that meet accessibility standards. Blocking must be installed to support these handrails.

Riser heights and tread depths should be uniform. Treads must be slip-resistant, have no open risers, or be compatible with riser covers.

Lighting must be adequate at the tread level. Stair nosing should accommodate a slip-resistant, high-contrast strip without altering the stair.

Paths of travel

Entrances and paths: Accessible-ready homes must have ground-level entrances or ramps and paths that meet accessibility standards. They must also take into account future adaptations.

Area allowances: Requirements for paths of travel are set out but allow exceptions that consider short indentations and doorways. DAR plans should meet these requirements without major changes to the house systems.

Headroom: Paths of travel must have minimum headroom clearances including for basements and doorways.

Protruding objects: Protrusions must be detectable by canes. DAR plans should meet these requirements without major changes to the house systems.

Interior vertical paths of travel

Interior vertical path of travel: Multi-storey dwellings must allow for future installation of accessible vertical access, like elevators, without changing structural, electrical, plumbing, or HVAC systems. Raised or sunken floors must connect to the accessible path.

Elevating devices: If elevating devices like elevators are installed, they must meet CSA/ASC B652. The design must allow for easy future installation to reduce retrofitting costs.

Emergencies

Emergency Features and alert devices must meet standards for visual and audible signals, with considerations for future accessibility needs.

Emergency exists in DAR plans must meet CSA/ASC B652.

Alert and signal devices must provide both visual and audible signals.

Annexes with detailed instructions

Annexes A through D are normative meaning their requirements are mandatory. They apply to:

- accessibility drawings;
- structural framing;
- building envelope;
- electrical systems;
- mechanical systems;
- plumbing systems;
- exterior path ramps;
- clearing floor space; and
- doors in series.

