



# SUMMARY OF PIMA COUNTY'S INCLUSIVE HOME DESIGN ORDINANCE

## **BACKGROUND**

In response to the needs of a rapidly growing number of senior citizens and persons with disabilities, the Pima County Board of Supervisors adopted the Inclusive Home Design Ordinance. This ordinance requires that all newly built homes offer a very basic level of accessibility. Requirements of this ordinance, which are summarized below, are a minimum standard. Alternative designs, products, or technologies which provide equivalent or superior accessibility and usability, may be used. THIS ORDINANCE DOES NOT REQUIRE EXISTING HOMES TO BE RETROFITTED.

## **APPLICATION**

This ordinance applies to all dwelling units (site-built homes) constructed in unincorporated Pima County after October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Dwelling units for which plans have already been certified prior to October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002 shall be exempt from its provisions until the date of their next annual renewal. These are detached one, two and three-family homes which have one occupiable floor at grade level.

## **ACCESSIBLE FLOOR**

This is any occupiable floor which is less than one story above or below grade, with direct access to grade.

## **EXTERIOR ACCESSIBLE ROUTE**

There shall be at least one exterior accessible route to the accessible entrance. This route may originate from the carport, driveway, or public street or sidewalk. The slope of this accessible route to the accessible entrance shall not exceed one-foot vertical rise per twenty feet horizontal distance (1:20), unless a ramp is constructed complying with the 2000 International Residential Code; (ramps may have a grade of 1:12).

## **ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE**

There shall be at least one no-step, accessible entrance to the home. This entrance may be at the front, back, side, garage or carport of the home, but may not be through a bedroom. The door of this entrance shall be 32" wide minimum and shall meet the door hardware requirements described in this pamphlet.

## **INTERIOR ACCESSIBLE ROUTE**

At least one accessible route shall connect all spaces and elements which are a part of the accessible floor of the home. Exceptions to the interior accessible route provision include a raised or sunken portion of a living, dining or sleeping room. This route shall not pass through bathrooms, closets, or similar spaces. As per existing code, this route is required to be 36" wide minimum.

## **THRESHOLDS**

Thresholds at the accessible entrance and along accessible routes may be ½ inch high maximum. Changes in level which exceed ¼ inch high, shall be beveled, with a slope not steeper than one inch rise to 2 inch run (1:2).

## **INTERIOR DOORS**

Doorways on the accessible route shall have a clear opening of 30 inches wide minimum. A 32" (2' 8") wide door satisfies these requirements. This door shall contain hardware meeting the door hardware requirements described in this pamphlet.

## DOOR HARDWARE

Handles, pulls, latches, locks, and other operable parts on accessible doors shall have a shape that is easy to grasp with one hand and that does not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist to operate. Lever hardware satisfies the requirements of this provision.

## BATHROOM WALL REINFORCEMENT

In bathrooms on the accessible route, reinforcement shall be installed to allow the future installation of grab bars on walls adjacent to the tub and toilet. In addition, reinforcement shall be installed in shower compartments for future installation of grab bars. This reinforcement shall be installed flush with the studs and at the following locations:

Toilet: 33"-36" above the floor on all adjacent walls. Horizontal length of reinforcement shall be sufficient to allow a 42" grab bar and 24" rear grab bar. **Note:** Nothing in the ordinance requires that the toilet be placed by a side wall.

Tub: Horizontal length reinforcement shall be sufficient to allow for

- a) Back Wall: Two backing reinforcements, one backing reinforcement horizontal position 33" minimum and 36" maximum above the floor, and one backing reinforcement 9" above the rim of the bathtub. Each backing reinforcement shall be 24" long minimum and shall be 24" maximum from the head end wall and 12" maximum from the foot end wall.
- b) Foot End Wall: One backing reinforcement 24" long minimum on the foot end wall at the front edge of the bathtub.
- c) Head End Wall: One backing reinforcement 12" long minimum on the head end wall at the front edge of the bathtub.
- d) Shower walls shall have backing on a minimum of two walls not to include control valve wall mounted at 33" - 36" above shower floor.

All wall reinforcement shall be capable of resisting shear and bending forces of a minimum of 250 pounds. Reinforcement is not required at the location of vanities, linen closets, and pre-molded shower/tub surrounds, or in a room containing only a sink and a toilet, provided that the room does not contain the only sink or toilet on the accessible floor of the home.

## ELECTRICAL

- All light controls shall be placed no higher than 48", on center, above the floor.
- Where practical, all electrical receptacles shall be placed no lower than 15", on center, above the floor.
- All thermostats shall be placed no higher than 54", on center, above the floor.

The exceptions to these provisions are as follows:

1. Electrical receptacles serving a dedicated use.
2. Appliance mounted controls or switches.
3. A single outlet where all of the following conditions are met:
  - d) The outlet is above a length of countertop that is uninterrupted by a sink or appliance; and
  - e) At least one receptacle is provided for that length of countertop; and
  - f) All other receptacles provided for that length of countertop set no higher than 48".
4. Floor electrical receptacles.
5. Plumbing fixture controls.
6. HVAC diffusers.
7. Ceiling fan mounted controls.

## WAIVER PROVISIONS

Upon a determination by the Building Official that by virtue of terrain or other unusual characteristics of the building site, there are practical difficulties associated with compliance of any specific provision of this standard, and that the additional cost to comply with the applicable provision of this standard shall exceed two hundred dollars, as shown by clear and convincing evidence presented by the applicant, the Building Official may waive the requirements of that specific provision.

For any question, please contact Development Services Building Codes Division at (520) 740-6490.