

## Checklist of best practices

Design professionals have an obligation to adhere to the accessibility requirements of the FHA and ADA. Here are some best practices that can help you remain compliant:



- Frequently reference the Fair Housing Act Design Manual, particularly Chapter 2: Accessible and Usable Public and Common Use Areas.
- Choose courses that highlight accessibility for your continuing education units (CEUs).
- Overlay the required clear floor space, protruding object protections, and accessible routes onto all floor plans and sketches.
- Create a checklist of all accessibility requirements to serve as a final punch-list for your plans.
- Have 3rd party accessibility experts and/or people with disabilities review your designs.



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### THE EQUAL RIGHTS CENTER

Main - 202.234.3062

Toll Free - 866.719.4372

Relay 711

[www.equalrightscenter.org](http://www.equalrightscenter.org)  
[info@equalrightscenter.org](mailto:info@equalrightscenter.org)



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# INTERIOR DESIGN & THE FAIR HOUSING ACT



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## Did you know?

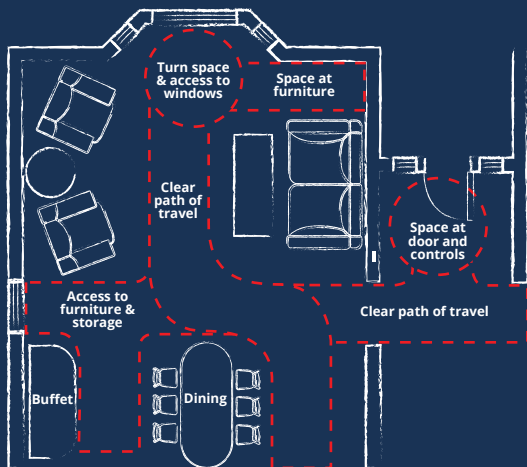
The Fair Housing Act (FHA) design and construction requirements are applicable to all common use areas. **Common use areas** are rooms, spaces, and elements inside and outside of a multi-family building that are made available to residents and guests of residents.

Common use areas may include:

- Fitness centers
- Barbecue areas
- Dog parks
- Lounges/game rooms
- Movie theaters/media rooms
- Business centers
- Pools

The accessibility requirements for **public use areas** are covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Public use areas are any interior or exterior portions of a building made available to the general public and may include:

- Leasing offices
- Model units



Design professionals must incorporate accessibility requirements under the FHA and ADA when designing a space within a multi-family property. Failure to do so could result in lawsuits against design firms or design professionals for not meeting their obligations for accessibility under these laws.

## Some major considerations are:



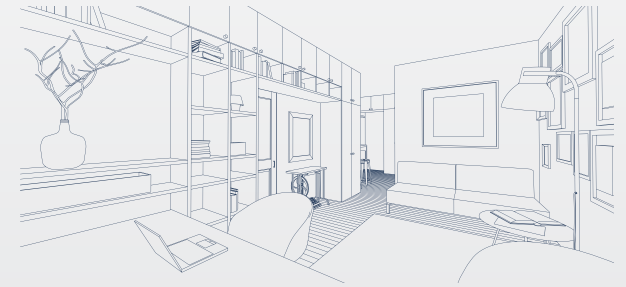
Artwork, light fixtures, wall-hung televisions, and landscaping can create hazards to residents who are blind or have low vision if they are not installed or maintained properly. Objects cannot protrude more than 4" off the wall or into the circulation path, unless there is a detectable barrier below 27".



Whenever one of a type of element, feature, or space is provided for the common use of residents, it must be usable by people who use wheelchairs and placed on an accessible route (level, and at least 36" wide). If multiple features are provided, a sufficient number of each type must be accessible.

## Common mistakes to look out for:

✗ Lounges or spaces with high top tables or counters, such as at a bar, do not have an accessible portion that is no taller than 34" high and at least 36" wide.



✗ Unique elements and features within a space, such as each type of fitness equipment or televisions and DVD players, do not have the proper clear floor space (30" x 48") to allow for a forward or parallel approach by someone using a wheelchair.

✗ Interactive items, such as barbecues, do not have their operable parts within accessible reach ranges (below 48" high, unobstructed).

✗ Transitions between floor types do not have beveled thresholds less than 1/2".