

**CANADA MORTGAGE AND
HOUSING CORPORATION**

Universal Design

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Universal Design: minimum eligibility requirements table, for housing program applicants

The Universal Design minimum requirements are intended to determine CMHC program eligibility only. The minimum program eligibility requirements set out in the table below reflect a CMHC understanding about what is required for Universal Design minimum standards within our programing. This view of UD may not be shared by all.

TABLE – Universal Design Requirements

Technical Criteria for Universal Design Dwelling Units (Multi-Unit Residential Buildings, New Construction) – new

Note: Table incorporates key requirements only - source should be referenced for further detail as required.

Note: Unless noted otherwise, all dimensions are in millimeters.

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CSA B651:23 = 2023 CSA/ASC Accessible design for the built environment

CSA B652:23 = 2023 CSA/ASC Accessible dwellings

CSA B651:12 = 2012 CSA Accessible design for the built environment

CMHC UD Guide = CMHC’s Universal design for new multi-unit residential buildings

ID	Category	Sub-Category	Key Features	Source	CMHC UD ¹ Guide better practice guidelines, not required
Approach to the Building					
1.	Approach to the building	Exterior pathways	Accessible paths of travel shall have a width at least a. 1200 for the interior environment, b. 1500 for the exterior environment CSA / ASC B652:23 4.4 (page 25)	CMHC UD Guide, pg. 19, 20	CMHC UD Guide: Pathways: Wide accessible pathways, using changing textures and raised curbs to differentiate edges (min. 1,600 width).
2.	Approach to the building	Exterior pathways	Stable, firm and slip resistant surfaces, see CSA/ASC B652:23 4.6.1.	CMHC UD Guide, pg. 20	
3.	Approach to the building	Exterior entrances and landings	Have a running slope not steeper than a ratio of 1:20 (5%), unless designed as a ramp, see CSA/ASC B652:23 5.2.1 Exterior route, page 54	Page 23 CMHC UD Guide	
4.	Approach to the building	Exterior entrances and landings	Cross-slope no steeper than the ratio of 1:50 (2%), see CSA/ASC B652:23 5.2.1 Exterior route, page 54.	Page 23 CMHC UD Guide	
5.	Approach to the building	External pathways	Edge protection: where there is a change in level or drop-off adjacent to the accessible path of travel, have side protection, see CSA/ASC B652:23 5.2.1.	Page 20 CMHC UD Guide	

¹ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/industry-innovation-and-leadership/industry-expertise/accessible-adaptable-housing/universal-design-new-multi-unit-residential-buildings>

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6.	Approach to the building	Exterior entrances and landings	There is, at either side of an accessible doorway, a minimum area of 2,100 x 2,100. CSA/ASC B652:23 5.7.2.1	CMHC UD Guide, page 24	
7.	Approach to the building	Exterior entrances and landings	Thresholds shall a. be not more than 13 high; and b. where over 6 high, be bevelled at a slope not steeper than a ratio of 1:2 (50%) CSA/ASC B652:23 5.7.4	CMHC UD Guide, page 23	
8.	Approach to the building	Exterior entrances and landings	Clear opening width of at least 860, see CSA/ASC B652:23 5.7.1.	CMHC UD Guide, page 23	All doorways should be wide enough for diverse users to pass through. All entrances should be 920 wide, or at minimum 860 wide. Designers need to fully consider the width of the door in relation to the door hardware and manoeuvring needs of people using larger mobility devices. CMHC UD Guide page 23.
9.	Approach to the building	Exterior entrance and landings	All doors and / or frames must have a visible contrast with the surrounding wall.	CMHC UD Guide, page 23	Requirement enables wayfinding for people with low vision.
10.	Approach to the building	Entrance Doors	Install hardware, such as lever handles and push bars that are easy to operate with minimal force.	CMHC UD Guide, page 23	Suggested guidance: CSA/ASC B652:23 5.7.5 Door hardware
11.	Approach to the building.	Exterior seating area (if provided):	Permanent seating area must be accessible, with space for wheelchairs next to any provided seating. Seating options must include back and arm support.	CMHC UD Guide, page 19,	Seating with arm and back support responds to aging in place requirements or other populations who prefer back / arm support while seated. Better practice includes providing shelter from weather elements and sufficient lighting.
12.	Approach to the building	Exterior seating area (if provided)	Permanent tables: (if provided) must be on a level / firm surface that extends at least 2000 on all sides; and must have a knee clearance under the table (in at least one area of the table, see CSA B651:23 8.6.3.2.	CMHC UD Guide, page 19,	Although an exterior seating area and tables are not required (some buildings may not have the space), if seating is provided and tables are available, they should meet the requirements listed.
13.	Approach to the building	Exterior entrance area	Exterior lighting: must be bright and even (illuminated to at least 100 lx). See CSA/ASC B651:23 4.3.7.1.	CMHC UD Guide, page 19	Responds to requirements related to visual / hearing impairments as well as safety requirements.
14.	Approach to the building	Exterior spaces (if provided)	Use landmarks as orientation points that support wayfinding.	CMHC UD Guide, page 19	Responds to requirements related to aging in place (i.e., dementia). - (e.g., Strategically located plantings, structures and water and art features)

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15.	Approach to the building	Exterior pathways	Handrails (if provided): Railings must guide the path of travel, must be easy to grip, have no sharp edges, and do not have brackets that interrupt hand movement along the railing (see Figure 5, CMHC UD Guide).	CMHC UD Guide, page 20	Requirement responds to aging in place / universal needs, with the assumption that if building code requires handrails (for ramps etc.), the architect will respond to these requirements first. This handrail requirement is additional to any BC requirements.
16.	Approach to the building	Parking (when provided)	Parking Area Lighting: Where provided, interior, exterior or covered must be even, well-lit parking areas for adequate safety Illuminated to at least 500 lx. See CSA/ASC B652:23 4.8.1.1.1 Table 3, Garage.	CMHC UD Guide, page 21/22	
17.	Approach to the building	Parking	Where provided, interior, exterior or covered parking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian routes comply with CSA/ASC B651:23 B651:23 9.2 • Where provided, passenger pick-up areas to comply with CSA/ASC B651:23 9.3 • Designated parking spaces to comply with CSA/ASC B651:23 9.4 	CMHC UD Guide, page 21/22	Comply with CSA/ASC B651:23 9
18.	Approach to the building:	Drop off area / temporary parking	Provide a designated area for safe passenger drop-offs and equipment / furniture loading area.	CMHC UD Guide, page 21/22	
19.	Approach to the building:	Bike parking (if provided)	Provide a protected space, with racks, with lights, with locks, on same level as ground etc.	CMHC UD Guide, page 21/22	Better practice: allow for at least one bike per unit in the bike parking area.
Interior Common Areas					
20.	Interior common areas	Elevators	Visual contrast: Provide contrast around elevator frame and between interior walls and floor of elevator cabs.	CMHC UD Guide, page 26	Guidance responds to people with low vision.
21.	Interior Common Areas	Corridors	Corridors at least 1,200 wide at minimum. See CSA/ASC B652:23 5.8.1.	CMHC UD Guide, page 27	Better practice is 1,800 wide.
22.	Interior Common Areas	Lobby / meeting rooms (if provided)	If a meeting room / lobby is potentially a high glare space: provisions must be made to reduce glare through features such as external canopies, awnings, or shades, or tinted coatings on windows.	CMHC UD Guide, page 27-29	Requirement responds to aging in place / universal needs/ low vision.

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23.	Interior Common Areas	Lobby / meeting rooms (if provided)	If a meeting room / lobby potentially has a high level of noise: reduce sound reverberation using sound absorbing materials (e.g., curtains). Ensure assistive listening system is provided to amplify audible communication for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.	CMHC UD Guide, page 27-29	Requirement responds to aging in place / universal needs/ hearing difficulties and cognitive needs (lower external stimulus)
24.	Interior Common Areas	Corridors	No steps or abrupt changes in level (unless the change in level can accommodate mobility devices, such as slopes or ramps).	CMHC UD Guide, page 27-29	Better practice: Provide pathways with simple layouts (avoid unnecessary turns), obstacle free (recess objects (e.g.; fire extinguishers, etc.) if they are required). Responds to aging in place / universal needs.
25.	Interior Common Areas	Doors and Doorways	Thresholds shall a. be not more than 13 high; and b. where over 6 high, be bevelled at a slope not steeper than a ratio of 1:2 (50%) CSA/ASC B652:23 5.7.4	CSA/ASC B652:23 5.7.4	
26.	Interior Common Areas	Doors and Doorways	Clear opening width of at least 860, see CSA/ASC B652:23 5.7.1.	CMHC UD Guide, page 23	Better practice: 920
27.	Interior Common Areas	Doors and Doorways	Provide accessible door hardware (i.e. lever handles).	CMHC UD Guide, page 45	
28.	Interior Common Areas	Common areas: kitchen (if provided)	Provide multi-height or height adaptable working surfaces, countertops.	CMHC UD Guide, page 45	
29.	Interior Common Areas	Common areas: bathroom (if provided)	At least one washroom in a common area must be visitable and shall comply with all the provisions of Clause 6.2 (Clause 6.3 is optional).	CMHC UD Guide, page 32,	See CSA/ASC B652 5.9.1.
30.	Interior Common Areas	Common Areas: Service Area (if provided)	If provided: ensure laundry facilities, mailrooms, garbage disposal are on an accessible route; all facilities must be well lit.	CMHC UD Guide, page 30	Better Practice: laundry machines should be front loading and laundry rooms should have security features such as CCTV.
31.	Interior Common Areas	Common Areas: Service Area (if provided)	If provided: ensure laundry facilities, mailrooms, garbage disposal have 820 x 1390 in front of devices. See CSA/ASC B651:23 4.3.2.	CMHC UD Guide, page 30	New better practice – ensure adequate lighting and accessible doorways are provided.
32.	Residential Unit General	Path of travel	There shall be an unobstructed path throughout the dwelling (1,200 wide corridors) leading to all spaces including, kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms, exterior doors, storage areas, exterior balconies, and patios (where provided) in the dwelling unit.	CMHC Guide, page 45	

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33.	Residential Unit General	Entrance to unit	Clear opening width of at least 860, see CSA/SC B652:23 5.7.1	CMHC Guide, page 45	Better Practice: 920 door width and multiple height viewers.
34.	Residential Unit	Entrance to the unit	Viewers through the entry door must also be provided at multiple heights.	CMHC Guide, page 45	
35.	Residential Unit General	Doorways within the unit	No threshold (or low threshold, no more than 13) for all doorways within the unit, including doors to exterior balcony or terrace.	CMHC Guide, page 45	Some exceptions may be made for patios.
36.	Residential Unit General	Doorways within the unit	All door frames must be contrasted to the surrounding wall / area.	CMHC Guide, page 45	Enabling people with low vision to view doorways.
37.	Residential Unit General	Hardware throughout the unit	Lever door handles and hardware must comply with CSA/ASC B652:23 for all doors and cupboards within the unit.	CMHC Guide, page 45	Enabling minimal effort for traveling throughout the unit.
Residential Unit: Bathrooms					
38.	Bathroom	Accessible	One full bathroom must be located on an unobstructed path with a door width of 860 minimum, and 1,800 turning circle, see CSA/ASC B652:23 5.9.2.	CMHC Guide, Page 32 – 36 of the guide	
39.	Bathrooms	Flooring	Stable, firm and slip resistant.	CMHC Guide, Page 32 – 36 of the guide	
40.	Bathrooms	Reinforcement	Provide appropriate structural support for grab bars in walls around toilet for immediate or future installation of grab bars.	CMHC Guide, Page 32 – 36 of the guide	
41.	Bathrooms	Reinforcement	Provide appropriate structural support for grab bars in walls around bathtub for immediate or future installation of grab bars.	CMHC Guide, Page 32 – 36 of the guide	
42.	Bathrooms	Reinforcement	Provide appropriate structural support for grab bars in walls around shower stall for immediate or future installation of grab bars.	CMHC Guide, Page 32 – 36 of the guide	
43.	Bathroom	Bathtub (if provided)	A clear floor area at least 900 wide shall be provided in front of the tub, along the whole width of the tub.	CMHC Guide, Page 32 – 36 of the guide	Better Practice: Provide 1,500 by 1,500 space in front of the bath or, at minimum, an area 900 deep.
44.	Bathroom	Shower	Provide 900 by 1,500 clear floor space in front of the shower at minimum, see CSA/ASC B652:23 5.9.13.2.	CMHC Guide, Page 32 – 36 of the guide	
45.	Bathroom	Shower	Provide a 1,500 x 900 curbless shower area within the shower. See CSA/ASC B652:23 5.9.13.2.	CMHC Guide, Page 32 – 36 of the guide	Low-height, premanufactured, shower base units can be used if curbless showers are not possible).
46.	Bathroom	Shower	Shower floor must be slip-resistant.	CMHC Guide, Page 32 – 36 of the guide	

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47.	Bathroom	Vanity	Use lever handle or motion sensor faucets.	CMHC Guide, page 35/36	
48.	Bathroom	Vanity	Water drains and pipes under the vanity must be offset to the rear of the sink, enabling future vanity station adaptations for wheelchairs or people requiring a seated position in front of the vanity (knee clearance in seated position).	CMHC Guide, Page 32 – 36 of the guide	
49.	Bathroom	Vanity	Install shut-off valves (allowing for easier renovation in the future) and mixing valves that will limit the water temperature to 49°C.	CMHC Guide, page 35/36	Better practice: To prevent the growth of Legionella bacteria, it is not recommended to lower the hot water storage tank temperature below 60°C (140°F)
50.	Bathroom	Toilet	Complies with CSA/ASC B652:23 5.9.10.1.	CMHC Guide, page 35/36	
Residential Unit: Kitchens					
51.	Kitchens	Floor space / layout	Provide an 1,800 turning circle area within the floorspace of the kitchen area.	CMHC Guide, pages 39-42	
52.	Kitchens	Sink	Lever handle or motion sensor faucets.	CMHC Guide, pages 39-42	
53.	Kitchens	Sink	Install shut-off valves (allowing for easier renovation in the future) and mixing valves that will limit the water temperature to 49°C.	CMHC Guide, pages 39-42	Better Practice: To prevent the growth of Legionella bacteria, it is not recommended to lower the hot water storage tank temperature below 60°C (140°F).
54.	Kitchens	Sink	Provide counter space on either side of sink (a corner sink is not recommended).	CMHC Guide, pages 39-42	
55.	Kitchen	Sink	Water drains and pipes under the sink must be offset to the rear of the sink, enabling future countertop adaptations for wheelchairs or people requiring a seated position in front of the sink (knee clearance in seated position).	CMHC Guide, pages 39-42	
56.	Kitchens	Lighting	Provide task lighting and the kitchen must have even lighting throughout. Ensure controls are adequate. Kitchen ambient lighting: 300 lx, countertop, sink: 750 Lx. See CSA/ASC B652:23 4.8.1.1.	CMHC Guide, pages 39-42	
57.	Kitchens	Counters	Pre-install wiring and junction boxes needed behind the walls so it will be possible to install electrically adjustable counters in the future.	CMHC Guide, pages 39-42	
58.	Kitchens	Path of travel	Must be located on an unobstructed path.	CMHC Guide, pages 39-42	

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Residential Unit: Living Spaces and Bedrooms					
59.	Unit Living Spaces and Bedrooms	Bedroom	One full bedroom meeting UD requirements (outlined below) must be available in each unit.	CMHC Guide, pages 46	
60.	Unit Living Spaces and Bedrooms	Bedroom	UD compliant bathroom must be accessible from UD compliant bedroom).	CMHC Guide, pages 45, 46	En-suite is better practice.
61.	Unit Living Spaces and Bedrooms	Bedroom	Ensure at least 1800 of floor space between one wall and the bed and between the foot of the bed and the wall, and at least 1200 floor space between the opposite wall and the bed. See CSA/ASC B652:23 5.11.1.2.	CMHC Guide, pages 45, 46	When a queen size bed is provided, a minimum 4458 wide by 4633 long bedroom should be provided to allow for an adequate manoeuvring area. Some flexibility is available; the minimum width can be reduced when a smaller bed (i.e., twin or single) is provided. See CSA/ASC B652:23 5.11.1.2.
62.	Unit Living Spaces and Bedrooms	Bedroom	Where intended for viewing, except, where located above a counter, have a windowsill not higher than 750 from the floor.	CMHC Guide, pages 45, 46	
63.	Unit Living Spaces and Bedrooms	Bedroom	Ensure electrical outlets, light switches, and floor clearances that are 820 long by 1390 wide by 230 high on either side of a bed.	CSA/ASC B652:23 5.11.1.2	
Mechanical and Electrical Systems and Equipment					
63.	Mechanical and Electrical Systems and Equipment	All rooms in dwelling unit	Provide rocker-style light switches.	CMHC Guide, pages 48,	
64.	Mechanical and Electrical Systems and Equipment	All rooms in dwelling unit	The centerline of the operating controls shall be located in a range a. between 400 and 1100 from the floor; and b. between 900 and 1100 from the floor in situations c. where reading a display is required (i.e., thermostat, d. intercom, etc.) See CSA/ASC B652:23 4.5.3.	CMHC Guide, pages 48	
65.	Mechanical and Electrical Systems and Equipment	All rooms in dwelling unit	Controls must be located within an area of clear floor space (minimum 820 x 1,390) and with a clear path of travel (no furniture, counters, etc.) for access by the user wherever possible).	CMHC Guide, pages 48	
66.	Mechanical and Electrical Systems and Equipment	All rooms in dwelling unit	Colour contrast controls with their background.	CMHC Guide, pages 48	

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