

Visitability *A Pathway Home*

Does a zero-step entrance require building a ramp?

No. There are many options for constructing a zero-step entrance. For example, a lot can be graded so that the sidewalk leads directly to the door.



A zero-step entryway should be attractive, welcoming and an integral part of the home.

This is accomplished by using thoughtful planning and design prior to construction.

Mark Earls; Earls Construction, Inc.



Earls Construction, Inc.

Do VISIBLE homes have curb appeal?

Yes. Visitability requires features to be built into the home from the start, which leads to a natural looking structure. In fact, in places that require VISIBLE homes, buyers who don't need the features tend not to even notice them but enjoy the convenience they offer none the less.

Just as planned zero-step entries for local businesses are unnoticeable, so too are they for homes.

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Visitability Standards in Missoula

All new single-family homes, duplexes and triplexes constructed with all of the following visitability features shall be fast-tracked through plan review and permitting and receive a Visitability Certificate.

The following main floor features are required for a VISIBLE home:

- ✓ At least one main floor **zero-step entrance** via **visible route**.
- ✓ All **Doors/Opening**s with minimum clear width of **32 inches**.
- ✓ **Bathroom/Half Bath** with clear floor space of **30 x 48 inches**.
- ✓ **Bathroom/Half Bath Walls** with **reinforcing/backing** to allow for future installation of grab bars.
- ✓ **Wall Electrical Outlets** at least **15 inches** above the finished floor.
- ✓ **Light Switches, Thermostats and Controls** placed **48 inches or lower** above the finished floor.

When seeking fast-track review and permitting, submit the Standard Residential Site Plan Check List, and a Visitability Check list, available at www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1716/Visitability-Program

Building Officials will authorize fast-tracking and permits shall be issued upon completion of plan review.

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Visitability is a national movement to build homes with three accessible design features:



1. One zero step entrance on an accessible path of travel from the street, sidewalk or driveway
2. Doorways that provide 32 inches clear space throughout the home's main floor and hallways that provide 36 inches of clear width
3. Basic access to a half or (preferably) full bath on the main floor



Summit Independent Living Center (800) 398-9002

Rural Institute (800) 732-0323

City of Missoula Development Services (406) 552-6630

What are the advantages of Visitability for home builders?

Builders who commit to meeting the Visitability standards listed in the Missoula Visitability Resolution would be fast-tracked through plan review and permitting.

Builders who meet this standard will receive a Visitability Certificate along with a Certificate of Occupancy.

In addition to the three standard Visitability features, other features are listed to provide freedom for future occupants to make minor access changes of their own and use the premises without difficulty.

Is Visitability affordable?

In new construction, it costs a negligible amount to make a home Visitable:

- \$0 - \$25 for a home on a concrete slab
- \$0 - \$600 for a home built with a basement

Renovating a home to be Visitable, on the other hand, can be prohibitively expensive and sometimes physically impossible depending on home's design.



Edgell Building Inc.



More Visitable homes in Missoula means more options I have for my clients.

Rebecca Donnelly,
Windemere Real Estate

Who benefits from making homes Visitable?

Everyone. Adding these basic access features doesn't stop people without mobility needs from using or enjoying the home. In fact, adding Visitability features helps anyone who:

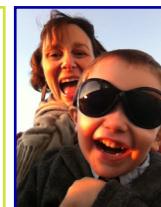
- is moving furniture
- is transporting strollers, bicycles, etc.
- needs to access the home during emergencies, such as firemen or paramedics
- temporarily loses their mobility through injury, such as those acquired from sports or high-risk jobs

A home with basic access is available to a wider market considering the aging population in the U.S.

Families living in Visitable homes are also able to welcome family and friends who have limited mobility without the need to devise makeshift access features that could potentially be dangerous and cause injuries.

We need a home that is visitable by all our friends and family!

Jenny Montgomery



Visitability is important to me because I want to stay in my home as long as possible!

Barbara Blanchard

Who needs Visitable home design?

Veterans and older adults are two groups of people who tend to need Visitable homes more frequently than the general population in order to remain independent.

Veterans:

- Nearly half of Wounded Warrior veterans surveyed said physical health interfered with normal social activities
- Half have severe back, neck, or shoulder problems
- One out of three have knee injuries or problems
- One out of four need some form of attendant care

Older Adults (Age 65 or older) in Missoula County:

- 2,500 report having difficulty walking
- 1,000 have difficulty with self-care
- 1,500 have difficulty living independently
- More than 7,000 live alone

