

No. B09-04  
November 2, 2009

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### **New Adaptable Housing Standards in the BC Building Code**

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New standards for the design and construction of adaptable housing have been added to the BC Building Code. The new standards include wider doorways, accessible entrances, extra reinforcement in bathroom walls to allow grab bars to be installed and easy-to-use light switches and door handles. A summary of the new standards is available at [http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/adaptable\\_housing/summary.html](http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/adaptable_housing/summary.html).

Adaptable housing is designed and built so that accessibility features can be added more easily and inexpensively after construction. It will benefit anyone whose mobility is limited due to age, disability or illness, making it easier for them to function more independently in their own home.

#### **Scope of the Adaptable Housing Standards**

The new standards will apply to single-storey suites in new residential multi-unit buildings, but the Building Code will not *require* these suites to be adaptable. Individual local governments that want to require adaptable housing within their communities can add the requirement to their land use bylaws, with a reference to compliance with the standards in the Building Code. This approach provides consistency in how adaptable housing is designed and built, while giving local governments the flexibility to decide whether they want to require it.

The Building Code already requires residential multi-unit buildings to have a minimum level of accessibility. The new standards include additional accessibility requirements that will apply to the individual units as well as to building entrances, corridors and common areas.

#### **Implementation**

The new standards will apply to building permit applications for developments that include adaptable housing that are submitted on or after December 31, 2009, whether adaptable housing is required by bylaw or built voluntarily. More information can be found at [http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/adaptable\\_housing/index.html](http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/adaptable_housing/index.html).