

# Lifetime Home Survey

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This assessment combats “Peter Pan Housing”—homes built as if the residents never change. Whether building new or remodeling, we’re passionate about helping clients live better by planning, designing and constructing features which emphasize energy efficiency, convenience, comfort, safety/control and enjoyment.

Ideally your home is where you make happy memories, not an obstacle course or hassle. Review completely inside and outside your entire property boundary. Make “lifetime design” a priority if you’re building a “last” or dream home to support being active the rest of your life no matter what happens.

[BuilderFish®](#) recommends and practices Universal (lifespan) Design, a home “usable by most” regardless of someone’s age, condition or abilities. The house accommodates every life stage and most circumstances. Simply, **UD = EZ (convenient/efficient) to the greatest extent**, a socially sustainable design which includes energy efficiency and conservation.

Adopt this mindset as you begin to tour your home:

Think family: Imagine and anticipate the children and adults who might live, own, rent or visit. People come in all shapes, sizes, and abilities. Don’t forget pets and how you will care for them as you both age or as family life changes.

Consider the long haul: What are your family’s current needs, resources, budget, and health? What’s your family history? What changes are planned? What’s on the wish list?

Be efficient: Think not only of saving money on utility bills but also conserving your own personal effort by reducing when you must bend, stoop, stretch or reach. Position outlets, switches and fixtures at point-of-use. Consider automating lights and appliances.

Remember “life happens”: Universal Design isn’t about inability/disability, more like ANY-ability, so plan for “what if” by ensuring you can care for yourself and family members throughout an accident, injury or illness. Make your property accessible inside and outside.

Do not confuse ADA or nursing homes: The Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines do not apply to private residences, only public and commercial spaces. Universal Design done right is invisible, so don’t worry about your home looking like a hospital room. How often do you notice a wider doorway or hallway? (When you’re moving furniture, otherwise you likely wouldn’t.)

Give yourself a break: Don't suffer paralysis by over analysis, no house can be universally perfect because life changes in unexpected ways; however, you can still prepare for most situations. What follows suggest a range of options and alternatives. Your home may already have some of these features or you may only be able to achieve "better" but not "ideal". Don't let perfect be the enemy of good.

Don't get overwhelmed. If you're not sure where to begin, start with access into the home then improve the bathrooms, kitchen and master bedroom in that order. If your budget is tight, review your yard or areas of the home for inexpensive fixes (i.e. simply removing or rearranging obstacles is free) or replace fixtures and knobs as money allows. Primarily, take action somewhere first and you'll be better off than the day before. Correcting ONE thing is the beginning of making your home livable for a lifetime.




Grab a tape measure: These are whole house general guidelines, your preferred custom solution may vary. So much about Universal (lifetime) Design is merely positioning, removing, raising/lowering or widening. You will achieve vast improvement simply by adhering to these core measurements:

- 36 inches: minimum width of an accessible, continuous route, path, sidewalk or hallway
- 42 to 48 inches: preferred clearance for hallways (48" VA's Specially Adapted Housing\*)
- 32 inches: minimum clearance of open doorways (i.e. with the door on its hinges)
- 36 inches: 3'-0" door (pronounced "Three-Oh") preferred to allow 34-inch clear passage
- 5 X 5 feet: 60-inch square, clear space for standard wheelchair in all areas where turning required (inside/outside main entry, at landings and within bathrooms/kitchen)
- 28 to 36 inches: finished tabletop or countertop heights for accessibility and easy reach
- 27 to 29 inches: knee space clearance measured from finished floor to bottom of desk, table, countertop, cooktop or sink for someone seated
- 18 to 48 inches: minimum to maximum height for controls, outlets, switches, shelves (i.e. nothing lower than 18 inches nor higher than 48 inches)
- 1:12 ratio: maximum slope of ramps (1 inch of rise per 12 inches in length)
- 1:20 ratio: maximum slope (angle, pitch) of walkway grading (1 inch rise per 20 inches in length, also known as a "walking ramp", doesn't require railing or curbs)

Learn more about socially sustainable design and see examples at the [BuilderFish blog](#) and [BuilderFish.com](#).

**\*Note**: SAH is the Department of Veterans Affairs [Specially Adapted Housing](#) grant for service disabled veterans and the program construction guidelines.

## **Start curbside (Getting TO and THROUGH the door):**

1. 36-inch wide, continuous passage from sidewalk, driveway, curb or garage to main entrance
2.  No slope, "earth berm" rise no steeper than 1:20 ratio
3. No trip/fall hazards (hose, toys, ornaments, lighting fixtures, gaps, cracks, edges, plantings, mulch, standing water)
4. ZERO Steps to main level entrance door via:  front  side  back  garage (if steps, how many \_\_\_\_\_ )
5.  Motion sensor lighting along entryway as well as additional exterior lighting
6.  Non-slip surfaces on walk/driveways with porous asphalt or pervious concrete
7. High contrast house numbers illuminated/reflective for night, distance visibility

## **Entryway**

8. Threshold:  flush (best)  1/4"  1/2"  beveled
9. Secure rails/supports at entry steps if steeper than 1:20 sloping
10. Maneuvering space outside and inside main entry doorway:  5' x 5'  6' x 6'
11. Covered entry or overhang to protect against weather
12. Saturated or ambient lighting, focused on the front door and keyhole
13. Shelf or bench for packages, keys and to set down other items

- 14. Mail slot or box is conveniently located, easy to reach seated or standing and can hold both letters and packages
- 15. Doorbell back-lit, easy to reach with visual and audible cues
- 16. Intercom system hardwired to landline phone or linked to cell or web-based systems
- 17. No less than 18 inches space (24-inches ideal) at latch, “pull side”, of entry door

### **Main Level Entry Door(s)**


- 18. No less than 3-foot wide exterior door (3'-0" or 36"), 4-foot (48") even better
- 19. [Door with offset hinges](#) (AKA, “swing clear”, “swing away”) for no less than 32 inches of clearance when open
- 20. Lever style door handle
- 21. Power-assist door or touch plates to open door (AKA push button power door)
- 22. Kick plate on door extends 10 to 11 inches from bottom
- 23. Keyless (key pad) or remote entry
- 24. Wide angle peephole with a 132° – 200° viewing angle at eye level or at 60 inches (standard), or additional peephole at custom height (42 inches)
- 25. Full-length sidelights at entry or window within door to see visitors
- 26. Keyhole is backlit
- 27. Security alert system with visual and audible alarms

## **Ramps (“last resort” if no other solution)**

28. No more than 1 inch rise per 12 inches length (1:12 ratio); 1:24 is best   
(Consider instead a lift for rises greater than 30 inches.)
29. Width:  3' (one-way)  4' (electric chair or scooter)  5' (two-way)
30. 5-foot square landing (60-inch turning radius) at entrance (and at any switchbacks)
31. 2-inch safety curbs on both sides (unless wall to one side)
32. Handrails on both sides 1.25-inch diameter
33. Handrails extend additional 12 inches beyond top and bottom of ramp
34. Permanent ramp material:  
 concrete  aluminum/metal  pressure treated wood  composite  brick (avoid!)
35. [Portable ramp](#)
36. Non-skid, weatherproofed surface
37. Exterior lift (many times better option than ramps depending on topography)

## **General Interior**


38. Open floor plan (avoid sharp boundaries between rooms, narrow hallways) with 5'x 5' maneuvering space in each room with furniture in place
39. Weight of building rests on exterior walls   
(limit interior, load bearing walls which restrict future renovation or layout changes)

40. No split levels or step-up/step-down to enter home or between rooms
41. Hallway Width:  36 inches  42 – 44 inches (ideal)  48 inches (SAH)  
 >60 inches (best)
42. Kitchen, laundry, bathroom (full preferred) and space for bed on ground or accessible floor (e.g. via basement)
43. Additional electrical outlets at no less than 18-inches from floor
44. If two stories or one story over basement, two closets stacked between floors for future elevator shaft
45. Main level “flex room” (den, office, playroom) can be converted to sleeping quarters
46. Reinforced ceiling for future installation of transfer lift with 600 pound capacity
47.  Automation for remote access, security/monitoring, alert, climate control, lighting, home entertainment, medication dispensing



## **Interior Doors**

48. Width for minimum 32-inch clearance:  34 inches (2’-10”)  36 inches (3’-0” best)
49. Alternative for narrow doorways: off-set (swing-clear) hinges lift door from doorway
50. Lever style hardware
51. Low or no thresholds (max 1/2 inch beveled, 1/4 inch or flush preferred)
52. At least 18 inches space at the latch, “pull” side of doors
53. Pocket (sliding) doors

## **Flooring**


- 54. Smooth, no glare, nonslip flooring, particularly in bathroom
- 55. Flush transitions between flooring surfaces (max 1/2 inch rise)
- 56. Hardwood flooring
- 57. Low pile, tightly woven carpet (less than ½ inch thick) with firm pad
- 58. Eliminate throw rugs, mats and any tripping hazards (cords)
- 59. Visual cues, (different colors, textures) delineate transitions between surfaces, rooms, interior/exterior
- 60.  No/low Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) (e.g. urea formaldehyde in wood)
- 61. For wheelchair users, if carpeting, then continuously glued to floor and no padding
- 62. For wheelchair users, durable, low maintenance flooring (e.g. non-slip ceramic tile )

## **Windows**

- 63.  Energy efficient, tilt-in/rotate, casement windows (i.e. easy, safe, prevents falls)
- 64.  \_\_\_\_\_ total windows with natural light, particularly in bathrooms and kitchen
- 65. Screens easily removed to inside or retract (e.g. [Clear View™](#))
- 66. Sills placed for viewing seated or standing at:
  - 24 inches
  - 26 inches
  - 30 inches
  - \_\_\_\_\_ inches (custom)
- 67. Crank handle windows

68. Automated/remote windows

69. Windows large and wide enough for fire/emergency escape? (Particularly in bedroom)

70.  Skylights or sun tunnels

## **Hardware**

71. Lever handles for all interior doors

72. Handle pulls on drawers and cabinets (D or loop-shaped ideal)

73. Easy glide/slow shut cabinet doors and drawers (prevents pinched fingers)

74. Magnetic touch latches on cabinet doors and drawers

## **Lighting Switches, Electrical Outlets and Controls**

75. Wall outlets:  18 inches  20 inches  22 inches (ideal seated)  24 inches

76. Telephone/cable jacks:  18 inches  20 inches  22 inches  24 inches





77. Rocker light switches 36 to 44 inches (max) above finished floor to center of switch

78. Slide or rocker dimmer switches

79. Touch switches



80. Light switches at the entrance of each room and hallway

81. Illuminated or backlit switches

- 82. Switched outlets for powering lamps or other equipment from wall
- 83. Programmable thermostat with large backlit digital display and large keypad
- 84. Separate thermostats for “zoned heating and cooling” in different parts of house
- 85.  [Nest self-programming, automatic thermostat](#)
- 86. Thermostat 48 inches (max to top) over finished floor (36 inches for seated user)
- 87.  Motion (automatic vacancy) sensor lights in bathrooms, laundry and closets
- 88.  Motion (automatic vacancy) sensor lights between rooms and hallways
- 89.  Voice activated sensors for lighting control
- 90. Circuit breaker panel accessible on main floor, top breaker no higher than 48 inches

## **Closets and Storage**

- 91. Width for roll-in/walk-in closet 5’ – 6’ for single line hanging and 8’ for double rows
- 92. Roll-through closet open at both ends (pass through)
- 93. 60 inches clear space either adjacent or within roll-in or walk-in closet
- 94. Adjustable rods and shelves easily reached either seated or standing
- 95. Half of total storage space less than 48 inches above the finished floor
- 96. Entry openings either cased or double doors

- 97. Pocket or sliding door that does not restrict access
- 98. Light switches outside closet or storage room
- 99. Automatic door switches activate lights when door opened
- 100.  Natural light sources (windows, sun tunnels, skylights)
- 101.  LED continuous, long life, efficient lighting
- 102. Powered clothing carousels

## **Safety and Security**

- 103. Security, smoke, fire and carbon monoxide alarms with visual and audible alarms hard-wired with battery backup
- 104. Fire extinguisher(s) within easy reach (and unit(s) serviced regularly)
- 105. Light receptacles with at least two bulbs at key points like entryways and bathrooms
- 106. Motion sensor lighting along pathways, illuminating driveway and all entryways
- 107. Flashing house lights or 911 switch
- 108. Visual and auditory warning systems or alerts
- 109. Web enabled security, video and intercom systems
- 110. Remote access via internet or cell for home systems (utilities, access, security)
- 111. Redundant/supplemental systems and back-up power

- 112. Anti-scald and easy, accessible shut-off valves
- 113. Breaker panel accessible and top breaker no higher than 48 inches above floor
- 114. Adequate ventilation and filtration of fresh air (forced mechanical from outside)
- 115. Water filtration and/or conditioning
- 116. Zoned HVAC with programmable thermostat no higher than 48 inches above floor
- 117. Contrasting colors at transition spaces warn of elevation changes



## **Kitchen**

### **Circulation and Floor Plan**

- 118. Open floor plan (double walking clearances), ideally 60-inch turning space
- 119. Width of circulation routes:  40–42 inches  44 inches  48 inches
- 120. Maneuvering space at work stations/appliances:  30" x 48"  60" diameter
- 121. Flooring water-resistant and easy to clean


### **Cabinetry and Storage**

- 122. Cabinets and drawers slow close automatically and completely
- 123. Wall cabinets at variable heights (some 3 inches below conventional 18 inches)
- 124. Pull-down shelving in upper cabinets for seated user
- 125. Full extension tracks, pull-out shelving on lower cabinets

- 126. Open shelving for frequently used items
- 127. Glass doors on wall cabinets for at-a-glance visibility of contents
- 128. Pantry closet with roll-out storage and/or rotating shelves or drawers
- 129. Pantry room with 36-inch doorway, interior cabinets, shelves, drawers and inside maneuvering space
- 130. Blind corner, rotating shelf, half moon pivot/slide shelves (e.g. [Magic Corners](#))
- 131. Lazy Susan atop counter and/or two tiered within lower cabinets
- 132. Hinges on cabinets beneath sink and cooktop open to 170 degrees for full access
- 133. Adaptable cabinets with removable, slide-back hinged doors and/or rolling sub-base permitting knee space and full access under:
  - Cook-top
  - Sink
  - Food prep area
- 134. Cabinet hardware easy to grasp, D rings or large pulls with ample finger room
- 135. Anti-glare, task lighting under cabinet (e.g. LED)
- 136.  Under cabinet, refrigerated drawers beneath/adjacent to food prep/cooking area
- 137.  Cabinets and food storage not constructed of Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) materials (e.g. no urea formaldehyde in wood, linked to cancer)




## Countertops

- 138. Durable and easy to clean (no grout lines or pitted/textured surfaces)
- 139. Countertops vary in height for both short/tall, seated/standing users (check all that apply) :  30 inches  34 inches  36 inches  40 inches  42 inches
- 140. Heat resistant countertops or pads adjacent to the oven, cooktop and microwave


- 141. Cooktop flush with countertop (i.e. sliding safer, less taxing than lifting)
- 142. Countertop corners rounded and edges beveled or bull-nosed (prevents cuts)
- 143. Contrasting colors or accented striping along counter edges to define boundaries   
(provides visual cues to avoid drops and spills)
- 144. 18 to 24 inches of clear counter space to each side of cooktop and sink
- 145. Minimum 24 inches clear counter space at one side of refrigerator and built-in oven
- 146. One counter section, 30 inches wide and 28 to 32 inches above floor, with knee space to accommodate seated user
- 147. Countertops no less than 24 inches deep
- 148.  Countertops constructed of non-toxic materials (no VOCs)




## Sink, Dishwasher and Water Systems

- 149. Sink is:  Stainless Steel     Cast Iron     Composite
- 150. Under-mount (versus Top-mount or “self-rimming”) sink for easier use, cleaning and design flexibility (ADA compliant models also available)
- 151. Single lever, high arc faucet with pull out hose/spray head   
(Look for model with on/off switch on wand)
- 152. Touch faucet (e.g. [Delta](#))
- 153. Touch-less (motion activated) faucet (e.g. [Delta](#))
- 154. Pedal controlled faucet


- 155. Automatic dishwasher with push button controls
- 156. Dishwasher immediately adjacent to sink
- 157. If affordable, two dishwashers (one on each side of sink) for convenience of using clean dishes from one unit while loading the other (i.e. reduces opening cabinets)
- 158. Dishwasher placed to dominant hand side of user from sink (i.e. dishwasher to right of sink if user is right-handed)
- 159. Dishwasher height set to those who use most often (Raised and/or side access)
- 160. Pipes, drains and garbage disposal offset and mounted toward rear of sink to enable knee space and storage underneath
- 161. Water line and faucet above cooktop for filling pots (to avoid lugging from sink)
- 162. Automatic and/or push button water shut-off system
- 163. Anti-scald valve set to 120 degrees maximum   
(100 degrees for people with spinal cord injuries)
- 164.  Water filtration or purification system
- 165.  Push button “power sink” raises/lowers (32 to 40 inches) to provide knee space
- 166.  Insulate all exposed waste and hot water lines to prevent burns and heat loss



## Lighting

- 167. Task lighting over sink, stove and work areas (LED ideal)
- 168.  General, indirect and task lighting is LED and [Energy Star](#) rated

169.  Light fixtures with electronic ballasts and linear or compact fluorescent bulbs positioned to reduce glare (LED is best)
170. Under cabinet glare free lighting (LED)
171. Dimmer switches for adjustable lighting
172.  Automated pre-set lighting
173.  Motion sensor or voice activated lighting
174. Automatic night lights
175. Luminous touch or rocker style switches at each entry point

## Kitchen Appliances

176. Easy to reach, simple to operate front mounted controls:
- Cook-top     Oven     Dishwasher     Refrigerator     Microwave
177. Oven top approximately 48 inches from floor for full, safe view and access
178. ADA compliant stove
179. Convection oven
180. Wall mounted oven with center of control panel 48 inches from finished floor
181. Center rack of wall oven approximately level with adjacent countertop
182. Flush, safety burners on cooktop (avoid raised burners) with warning lights
183.  Magnetic induction cooktop (e.g. [Wolf](#))
184. Free standing or under-cabinet microwave (avoid over range units)
185. Side-by-side refrigerator/freezer with water/ice dispensers mounted on door
186. Bottom drawer freezer

187.  [Under cabinet refrigerated drawers](#) beneath/adjacent food prep/cooking area
188. Dishwasher positioned (raised or side access?) for primary user
189. Disposal controls at front of countertop next to sink
190. Spring-loaded disposal switch must be held on to operate (safety feature)
191.  [Exhaust fan vented correctly outside, quiet and Energy Star rated](#)
192. Exhaust fan controls at front of countertop near stove/oven
193. Safety shut-offs and multiple cues on all appliances
194. Multiple outlets at counter for charging devices and multiple positioning options

## **Bathrooms**

### **Circulation and Floor Plan**

195. Circulation routes no less than 40 inches wide to get to bathroom
196. Minimum 34-inch clearance doorway (36-inch ideal)
197. Out-swing or pocket (sliding) door if tight floor plan
198. Accessible bath on main level with 60-inch turning radius or T-turn space
199. Floor space between fixtures no less than 30 inches by 48 inches (5' X 5' ideal)
200. Broad blocking behind drywall, floor to ceiling with  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch plywood around:
- Toilet       Bathtub       Shower       Sink
201. Reinforcement of ceiling (anchor framing) for future track-mounted transfer lift
202. Entire bathroom designed as “wet area”

## Vanity, Cabinetry and Storage



- 203. Vanity with knee space beneath and removable, adjustable shelving
- 204. Full extension, pull-out storage shelves in cabinets or closets
- 205. Vanity with removable sub-base
- 206. Sink cabinets 30 inches wide by 27 inches high and 19 inches deep, clear open space underneath for seated user
- 207. Drawers glide easily, close completely and automatically with a slight push
- 208. Pull handles on cabinetry
- 209. Full length, tilt mirror extending to backsplash at lavatory
- 210. Access into medicine cabinet seated or standing, located preferably at side of vanity   
(consider mounting with [swing-up hinges](#))
- 211. Hooks and hoops at point of use
- 212. Multi- or variable height counters with rounded corners (no sharp edges)
- 213. Contrasting color edge at border edge of countertops
- 214. Waste basket beneath or adjacent to sink or vanity

## Bathroom Sink

- 215. Large oval or round sink
- 216. Sink mounted close to counter's front edge
- 217. Double sinks at custom height for users
- 218. Wall hung sink (with piping concealed)



- 219. Single lever, high arc faucet
- 220. Touch or motion activated faucet (e.g. [Delta](#))
- 221. Faucet wand with extension hose
- 222. Side-mounted faucet (easier for children)
- 223. Under sink for seated user, allow minimum 29-inch clear height, 30-inch clear width, 19-inch clear depth and hide behind wall or insulate pipes
- 224. Drain placed toward rear

## Toilet

- 225. Toilets elongated and “comfort height”, 16.5 inches to rim, 18 inches to seat
- 226. Toilet centered at least 18 inches from side wall, allowing space for safety bar within easy reach without restricting chair access
- 227. Clear space 3 feet on one side and in front of toilet
- 228. Wall hung toilet
- 229. Toilet paper holder within easy reach, functions as safety bar and enables change of rolls with one hand
- 230.  Low flow, comfort height model with bidet functionality
- 231.  Easy flush lever or motion/automated flush

## Shower




- 232. Flush entry (curb-less or roll-in) shower insert
- 233. Curb-less custom tile with linear (channel) drain at front or rear edge
- 234. Low threshold entry less than 1/2 inch beveled
- 235. Wet room/area (waterproofed)
- 236. Dual shower
- 237. Custom floor drain unit with water flusher
- 238. Shower space:  36" x 36" (minimum)  36" x 60"  42" x 60"  48" x 60"
- 239. Built-in seats or bench in shower
- 240. Non-slip shower flooring (e.g. texture tile)
- 241. Radiant heat shower and/or bathroom floor
- 242. Slope of shower floor no greater than 1/8 inch per foot
- 243. Controls offset from center to minimize stooping, bending and reaching
- 244. Single Lever control for water temperature and flow
- 245. Lever style knobs for dual controls
- 246. Fixed shower head with detachable handheld wand on vertical slider bar with six foot flexible hose
- 247. On/Off switch built into wand
- 248. Additional controls within reach of shower seat or bench
- 249. Light within shower stall
- 250. Heat lamp in shower ceiling

251.  Automated (timer) or motion activated, energy efficient and quiet exhaust fan   
(confirm correct flow capacity for room size)
252.  Shower area and fixtures coated with antibacterial protection

### **Bathtub (avoid walk-in models)**

253. [Specifically designed and engineered for aging-in-place or therapy](#)
254. Low wall model with non-slip bottom
255. Single lever water control offset from center, nearest tub entry (access side)
256. Minimum 24 inch, sit-and-transfer platform across end of tub

### **Lighting & Electrical**

257.  Energy Star rated general and task LED lighting
258. Multiple electrical outlets within reach at the point of use
259. Backlit rocker (paddle style) light switches
260.  Automated or motion sensor lighting, particularly to/from and into bathroom
261.  Natural light from windows, skylights and sun tunnels



### **Bathroom Safety & Sanitation**

262. Durable non-slip flooring easy to clean (e.g. textured tile)
263. Wall coverings around toilet tiled or another non-porous product (composite)
264. Anti-scald valves set at 120 degrees maximum   
(100 degrees for people with spinal cord injuries)



- 265. Decorative safety/towel bars, 250 pound capacity, strategically positioned at each point of use (to eliminate over reaching) around tub, shower, sink
- 266. At-the-source ventilation (tub, shower, toilet) on timer to reduce mold, moisture
- 267. All hoops, hooks and fixtures securely braced to support weight of adult who slips and grabs for stability
- 268. Rounded corners and beveled or bull-nosed edges to countertops (no sharp edges)
- 269. Remove area rugs or mats which could slip, retain moisture or become moldy
- 270. Phone access, intercom or communication device within bathroom for emergency

## **Bedrooms**

- 271. First floor master
- 272. First floor “flex room” (e.g. den, living/dining room, office) convertible to bedroom
- 273. Clear space of at least 36 inches on two sides of the bed
- 274. Alternately, 60 inches to one side of bed
- 275. Mattress top no higher than 22 inches from floor for easiest transfer
- 276. Adjustable controls or motion LED, task lighting
- 277. Ceiling fan/light unit operated by remote control or rocker/slide switch
- 278. Clear space of 60 inches next to the closet

279. Closet doorway no less than 36 inches
280. LED lighting in walk-in closets, switch outside and adjacent to entrance
281. Motion activated lighting into closet
282. Walk-in or roll-in closets
283. Roll-through closet? (Enter one end, exit the other)
284. Closets with adjustable/multi-level shelving and clothing rods
285. Closet rods easily reachable seated or standing
286. Additional electrical outlets to accommodate medical or other equipment
287. Multiple outlets, telephone/cable/Internet jacks surrounding bed
288. Wall backing around bed for future installation of safety bars
289. Reinforced ceiling for future installation of transfer devices with 600 pound capacity
290.  Ceiling fan and light units are Energy Star rated
291.  Natural light from windows, sun tunnels or skylights in bedroom and/or closet
292. Visual and auditory alarms
293. Access to covered deck or patio

## Laundry and Utility Room

- 294. Laundry/utility rooms located on the main floor near master bedroom and bath
- 295. Utilities and main water shut-off included within laundry room (ideal)
- 296. Front loading washer and dryer with easy-to-read controls on the front
- 297. Front loading washer/dryer mounted 9 – 12 inches above finished floor
- 298. Controls and dispensers at point of use and easy to read
- 299. Multi-level shelving and work surfaces
- 300. Pull handles on cabinetry
- 301. Floor drain or pan under washer
- 302. Sink and work surfaces no more than 34 inches above floor with underneath seating
- 303. Single lever, touch or push button faucet or wand includes extension hose
- 304. Space saving folding table (  wall mounted? ) or wheeled carts
- 305. Main water shut-off valve located in laundry room on main level
- 306.  Automated/push button water shut-off valve
- 307. Task lighting
- 308.  Full natural light from windows, skylight or sun tunnels

## **Decks/Patios**

- 309. Flush threshold between home interior and deck/patio
- 310. Doors easy to open, close, lock and no less than 32 inches clear passage
- 311. Sliding doors/screens allow no less than 32 inches of clear passage when open
- 312. Retractable and/or powered screen doors (e.g. [Clear View™](#))
- 313. Decking/patio non-slip, weatherproofed and porous or channel drainage
- 314. Covered partially or entirely
- 315. 60-inch turning radius free of obstruction (i.e. furniture, planters)
- 316. Multiple exterior outlets
- 317. Deck railing/patio curb or knee walls
- 318. Planters/flower pots on rollers, planter boxes on railings, hanging baskets at convenient heights (pulleys) or lattice plantings
- 319. No-step (ideal) or gently sloped ramp (minimum 1:20 inch ratio) to ground level landing (e.g. sidewalk, driveway, landscaping)
- 320. Full area lighting both within and around deck/patio (no dark areas)
- 321. Automated or motion activated lighting

## **Stairways, lifts, elevators**

- 322. 60-inch turn radius at top and bottom of stairway


- 323. Straight, continuous, wide stairway without turns or curves (ideal for future lift)
- 324. Sturdy, continuous, dual handrails, contrasting color from wall
- 325. 1.25 inch diameter handrails
- 326. Wide treads accommodate mobility aids
- 327. Contrasting color, anti-slip strips on front edge of top and bottom stairs
- 328. Contrasting colors on treads and risers
- 329. Stair rise no higher than 7 inches from one step to next (smaller the better)
- 330. Stair treads no less than 12 inches, deep enough for foot (+12 inches better)
- 331. Steps do not have carpeting, open risers (open spaces between steps) or “nosing” (i.e. treads extending beyond risers). Each a tripping hazard
- 332. Stairway width minimum 4 feet (48 inches) for future chair lift
- 333. Rough-in wiring, backing and support for future chair/platform lift
- 334. For multi-story homes (including over basement), “stack closets” or pre-frame shaft and rough-in wiring for future elevator
- 335. Residential elevator or vertical lift (local code compliant)
- 336. Platform or chair lift (local code compliant)
- 337. Lighting wired up entire stairway


338. Lights switches at top and bottom of stairway, 36 – 40 inches above floor


339. Motion activated lighting


## **Siding and Roofing (preferably [Energy Star](#) rated)**

340.  Natural wood siding (FSC certified = [Forest Stewardship Council](#))


341.  Reclaimed natural wood siding

342.  Composite siding and trim


343.  Brick (local product)


344.  Stone or stone veneer

345.  Stucco and synthetic stucco











346.  Fiber cement siding/shingles (mixture of portland cement, sand, cellulose fiber e.g. [HardieShingle®](#), [Nichiha](#))

347. Vinyl siding (PVC = polyvinyl chloride)   
(Controversial “green” option, positive and negative characteristics)




348.  Insulated vinyl siding fused with foam for air/moisture barrier and thermal break  
(Learn more at [VinylSiding.org](#) )
















349.  [CraneBoard®](#) solid core vinyl siding (higher end, includes thermal protection)






350. House wrap with drainage plane (properly installed!)

- 351.  Metal roof (aluminum, ceramic or stone coated, copper, steel, tin)
- 352.  Standing seam metal roof with [Kynar 500®](#) fade/rust-proof coating
- 353.  Clay roof tiles
- 354.  Natural slate
- 355.  Synthetic slate shingles (plastic or rubber)
- 356.  Thermoplastic membrane roofing
- 357.  Solar photovoltaic (PV) or solar thermal system, partial or whole house
- 358.  Roof overhangs at least 24 inches enables passive cooling/heating (i.e. overhang influences angle of sun throughout the year)
- 359.  Raised heel roof trusses for improved insulation and efficiency
- 360.  [Vegetated “living/green roof”](#) (AKA “eco-roofs”, flowers, plants or grass)






## **Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation**

- 361.  [Home energy audit including blower door test?](#) (Date \_\_\_\_\_)
- 362.  Duct leakage/blaster test? (Date \_\_\_\_\_)
- 363. Operable windows (i.e. open/close easily and properly, weep holes not covered)
- 364.  [Energy Star windows](#) (sills at 24 to 30 inches for seated persons)

- 365.  Casement windows tilt-in/rotate via sash release (i.e. easy, safe, prevents falls)
- 366.  [All appliances Energy Star rated](#)
- 367.  Toilets and shower/sink faucets low flow
- 368.  Toilets dual flush
- 369.  [Tankless water heater](#)
- 370.  Collection systems (e.g. barrel, underground tank) divert/store rainwater from roof and for landscape irrigation
- 371.  [Porous paving/pervious concrete](#) enables water absorption instead of run-off
- 372.  Spray foam insulation and caulk (air/moisture barrier)
- 373.  Rigid foam sheathing
- 374.  Composite/recycled building materials (e.g. trim, decking, roofing)
- 375.  Passive solar home (orientation to sun)
- 376.  Structurally Insulated Panels ([SIPS.org](#))
- 377.  High performance thermal envelop including walls, ceilings and attic
- 378.  Automated/remote control of multi-zone heating and cooling
- 379.  [Nest self-programming, automatic thermostat](#)

- 380.  [Geothermal system](#)
- 381.  Hi-Efficiency hot water boilers (e.g. [Viessmann](#))
- 382.  Gas fireplace and blower with vented combustion air intake from outside
- 383.  EPA-certified fireplace insert/stove vented outside
- 384.  EPA-certified pellet stove vented outside


## **Indoor Air Quality**

- 385.  All ducts in conditioned space
- 386.  Tightly sealed ductwork (with leakage at or below 10 percent)
- 387.  Air sealing from garage to house
- 388. Cartridge filters in HVAC system changed regularly ( \_\_\_\_\_ times annually )
- 389. Carbon monoxide detectors
- 390. Mechanical fresh air ventilation system (from outside, not crawl or attic)
- 391.  [Energy recovery ventilator](#) (mixture of fresh intake and return air helps dehumidify)
- 392.  Automatic garage fan, triggered to door open/close, pulls out fumes
- 393. Radon detection/mitigation (as needed)
- 394. Construction materials (wood, paint) low or no [volatile organic compounds \(VOCs\)](#)

## **Driveways and Garages**

395. Paved, well lit driveway, ideally flat on grade level
396. Driveway standard minimum width of 12 feet
397. [Porous asphalt](#) or water redirected to prevent pooling
398. Landings at all entrances 5 feet by 5 feet (60 inches square)
399. Single garage door 9 feet wide
400. Double garage door 18 feet wide
401. Remote controlled or motion activated, power garage doors
402. Garage door tall enough to accommodate higher vehicles (e.g. van with chairlift), typically 18 to 24 inches higher than standard
403. Additionally, a retractable and/or powered screen, garage door for flexibility as “outdoor” space (e.g. [Clear View™](#))
404. No step, flush threshold and wide doorway from garage into house with all walkways no less than 36 inches wide
405. If detached garage, covered, no step walkway into house
406. No less than 3-foot clear path around and between all vehicles for easy maneuvering of strollers, bicycles, lawn mowers/power equipment, wheelchairs, etc.
407. Movable storage (roller carts/cabinets, shelving/benches with lockable wheels)
408. Exhaust fans and other ventilation

## Yard and Garden

- 409. No tripping hazards in yard, garden(s) and pathways
- 410. Raised beds and planters elevated and navigable from all sides for easy reach and care by seated person (24 inches maximum front-to-back)
- 411. Container, “planting in a pot” vegetable or flower gardens
- 412. Sprinkler system (ideally connected to rain collection storage tank)
- 413. “Firm” yard incorporates “[grass pave](#)” or “long life lattice” permitting grass growth while underfoot support
- 414. Pathways use roll-out systems (recycled rubber), pervious concrete/pavers or porous asphalt
- 415. Full area, automated/motion lighting
- 416.  Landscaping features native plants and deciduous trees on Southern side

## Miscellaneous

1. [Rub-R-Wall](#)<sup>®</sup> spray application waterproofing (by [Rubber Polymer Corporation](#))

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### **Questions?**

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