

**Oregon Structural Specialty Code
Dwelling Unit Comparison
Type A, Type B and Accessible**

Note: The following article was adapted from the 2012 IBC Commentary as published by the International Codes Council

Overview: There are three levels of accessibility described in the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) pertaining to dwelling units. Accessible units (always spelled with a capital “A”), Type A units and Type B units. Accessible units are required to be constructed as fully accessible, meaning all required features are present at first occupancy. Unlike Type A and Type B units, Accessible units have no features left as adaptable. Accessible units provide a “higher” level of accessibility than Type A and Type B units and are mandated in all Group I (as a percentage), in Group R-1 (per OSSC Table 1107.6.1.1), in most Group R-2 congregate living (as a percentage) and in Group R-4 (at least one unit). The technical criteria for Accessible dwelling units are identified in Section 1002 of the 2003 ICC A117.1.

OSSC 1107.2 Design. *Dwelling units and sleeping units that are required to be Accessible units, Type A units and Type B units shall comply with the applicable portions of Chapter 10 of ICC A117.1. Units required to be Type A units are permitted to be designed and constructed as Accessible units. Units required to be Type B units are permitted to be designed and constructed as Accessible units or as Type A units.*

Commentary:

There are three levels of accessibility that can be required in a dwelling unit or sleeping unit: Accessible units, Type A units and Type B units. An Accessible unit is constructed for full accessibility in accordance with Section 1002 of ICC A117.1. For example, grab bars are in place in the bathrooms, a clear floor space is provided for front approach at the kitchen sink and bathroom lavatories, 32-inch (813 mm) clear width doors with maneuvering clearances and lever hardware are provided, etc. None of the elements in the unit are constructed for adaptability. The requirements for an Accessible unit are more restrictive than either a Type A unit or a Type B unit.

A Type A unit has some elements that are constructed accessible [e.g., 32-inch (813 mm) clear width doors with maneuvering clearances and lever hardware] and some elements designed to be added or altered when needed (e.g., grab bars can be easily added in bathrooms since blocking in the walls is in place). Type A units follow the technical criteria in Section 1003 of ICC A117.1. This type of unit is less accessible than an Accessible unit and more accessible than a Type B unit. The scoping or technical requirements for Type B units are consistent with the requirements for units required by the Fair Housing Act Guidelines (FHAG).

A Type B unit is constructed to a lower level of accessibility than either an Accessible unit or a Type A unit. While a person who uses a wheelchair could maneuver in a Type B unit, the technical requirements are geared more towards persons with lesser mobility impairments. Type B units follow the technical requirements in Section 1004 of ICC A117.1. Areas of a Type B unit

are allowed to be totally non accessible (e.g., sunken living room, extra bedrooms on a mezzanine level). Side approach is permitted to sinks in the kitchen and lavatories in the bathroom rather than planning for a front approach. Some elements are constructed with a minimal level of accessibility [e.g., doors within the unit have a 31 3/4-inch (806 mm) clear width but do not require maneuvering clearances], while some elements are designed to be altered when needed (e.g., blocking in the walls of the bathroom for future installation of grab bars). This section also takes into consideration the fact that Accessible unit requirements are more stringent than Type A requirements, and Type A requirements are more stringent than Type B requirements. Units are permitted to be constructed to a higher level of accessibility than required.

The technical criteria for each type of unit in ICC A117.1 is organized in the same order and section number for each element, to make comparisons between unit types easier. For example, looking at the door provisions in Sections 1002.5, 1003.5 and 1004.5 of ICC A117.1 would clarify that the maneuvering clearances are required at all doors that are part of the accessible route through an Accessible unit or a Type A unit, but for the Type B unit, the maneuvering clearance is only required on the outside of the front door to the unit, not within the unit. Another example would be the requirements for operable parts: Section 1002.9 and 1003.9 address requirements for plumbing fixture and appliance controls, while per Section 1004.9, Type B units do not require plumbing fixture and appliance controls to meet operable parts requirements.

OSSC Definition: TYPE A UNIT. A dwelling unit or sleeping unit designed and constructed for accessibility in accordance with this code and the provisions for Type A units in ICC A117.1.

Commentary: *A Type A unit has some elements that are constructed for accessibility [e.g., 32-inch (813 mm) clear width doors with maneuvering clearances] and some elements that are constructed as adaptable (e.g., blocking for future installation of grab bars). A Type A dwelling unit is designed and constructed to provide accessibility for wheelchair users throughout the unit, and as such, is considered more accessible than a Type B dwelling unit. The technical requirements for the interior of Type A units are in Section 1003 of ICC A117.1.*

OSSC Definition: TYPE B UNIT. A dwelling unit or sleeping unit designed and constructed for accessibility in accordance with this code and the provisions for Type B units in ICC A117.1, consistent with the design and construction requirements of the federal Fair Housing Act.

Commentary: *Type B dwelling or sleeping unit is designed and constructed to provide a minimal level of accessibility, and as such, is considered less accessible than either an Accessible unit or a Type A unit. The requirements for Type B units are intended to be consistent with the Fair Housing Amendments Act (FHA). The technical requirements for the interior of Type B units are in Section 1004 of ICC A117.1.*

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