
Top 10

Accessibility Features In Short-Term Rental Properties



With renewed interest in post-pandemic travel and tourism, short-term rental property owners would do well to think about making accessibility modifications to their properties to grab some of the multi-billion-dollar market share of the more than 61 million Americans living with disability. With relatively few short-term accessible rental options currently on the market beyond standard ADA compliant hotel rooms, a property owner could position their rental to cash in by taking advantage of sensible, accessible modifications needed by those with disability. In a recent national survey conducted by Becoming rentABLE, here are the Top 10 accessibility features property owners should consider.

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Becoming rentABLE is dedicated to educating and changing the standards for accessible, short-term rental properties so people of ALL abilities can live their best life.

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1 Zero Threshold Entry/Wide Doorways

Zero threshold entry simply means the property can be accessed without stairs, instead using gentle slopes and minimal thresholds. Thresholds should not exceed 1/4" in height for all door types including exterior sliding doors. For your renters, it means easy entry, convenient access, and a greatly reduced risk of injury. Both exterior and interior door widths should be 36" in order to accommodate those who use a wheel chair or walker.

2 Non-skid Flooring

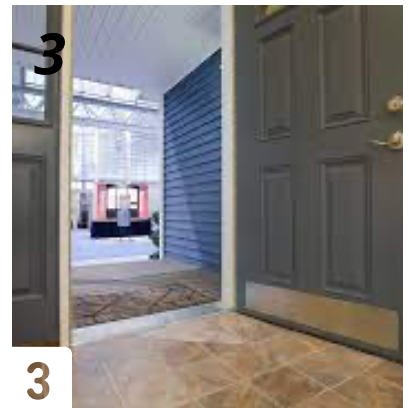
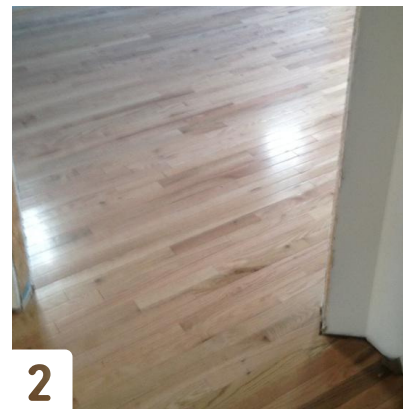
Those who have difficulty with mobility would benefit greatly by your use of non-skid flooring. Flooring should be stable, firm and slip resistant. There are many flooring products available with wood, bamboo, tile, and laminate being the most popular and durable. There are also many coating options for concrete floors. Carpeted floors can be difficult for those who use a wheel chair, so ideally should be avoided unless it is a low, tight weave with little or no padding underneath.

3 Open Floor Space/Hallways

In regard to furnishings, don't overcrowd your space. Those who have mobility issues need 36" of clearance around furniture to maneuver. This includes hallways which should be a minimum of 48" wide. Removing hall tables, credenzas, standing coat racks, and other such furniture will create more space. Your judicious use and positioning of furniture will go a long way in creating a welcoming atmosphere for all renters, and this modification is free.

4 Roll Under Sinks/Counters/Table

Those who use a wheel chair cannot typically access standard sinks in cabinets, counters or tables except to their side. Typical countertops and kitchen islands are positioned at a height of 36". However, accessible counter work surfaces, islands and kitchen sinks should be 30" to 34" height, and not obstructed by base cabinets to allow for knee and toe clearance. Wheel-under tables, kitchen islands, and countertop require knee space of a minimum of 27" high and 8" to 11" deep. In addition to being at least 27" high from the floor in order to be accessible, oval or round dining tables would be preferable to tables with squared edges. Bathroom sinks should be wall mounted or pedestal style to allow access. Using single lever or even touch control faucets are a smart, low-cost design feature for your renters.



5 Comfort Level Toilet

While traditional toilets are 15 inches high, comfort height toilets have higher seats than traditional toilets, usually between 17 inches and 19 inches. A comfort height toilet is especially beneficial for taller people, seniors and anyone with knee or back pain. The taller seat simply makes it easier to sit down, stand up, or transfer from a wheel chair. The cost difference between a standard toilet and a comfort height toilet is minimal. A toilet seat with a built in bidet is also a nice, low-cost accommodation, especially for those who have issues with dexterity. Grab bars should be installed on the side wall closest to the toilet. This will help someone with sitting, standing, or transferring from a wheelchair onto the toilet seat. There should also be a grab bar placed on the wall behind the toilet. Grab bars are not expensive, and some designs fold back out of the way when not in use.

6 Accessible Shower

Ideally, showers should be a roll-in design using non-slip flooring and equipped with grab bars. Built-in, wall-mounted, or even portable shower seating is a necessary feature for many persons with disabilities. Additionally, installing a hand-held shower head is welcome, low-cost accommodation to most renters. They install just as simply as a normal shower head, but allow users to direct water flow as needed. Hand-held showers heads are most effective when mounted on a vertical slide bar so both the height and the angle of the spray are adjustable. A lower position is ideal for small children or users who may need to sit when bathing. The slide bar should be mounted against the shower wall 48" - 52" above floor.

7 Motion-activated Lights

As a matter of safety and convenience, both exterior and interior motion sensor lighting makes a lot of sense. Negotiating landings, decks, patios, parking areas, stairways, steps, and even transitioning into other rooms can be haphazard when unlit. Additionally, standard height light switches are difficult to reach for those who use wheel chairs, those who are short, and children. Installing motion sensor lighting goes a long way to alleviate the issues. Such lighting could range from flood lighting a back yard patio to night lights in the hallway or bathroom, and are worth consideration.



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8 Accessible Appliance

Rental units with kitchens and laundry facility should have accessible appliances. When selecting appliances, consideration should be given to installation height, up front controls, and one hand operation features as these are necessary accommodations. Microwave ovens at or below counter height, dishwasher drawers, wall ovens with a side-opening door, clothes washers and dryers placed on pedestals, are all examples of welcome features for travelers with disability.

9 Adjustable/Elevated Bed

To ease the issue of transferring from a wheel chair to a bed, or for general ease of accessing a bed for those who have difficulty sitting and standing, beds should be at an accessible height between 20 to 23 inches from the floor to top of the mattress. Providing an adjustable bed platform should also be considered and would be a welcome accommodation by many.

10 Adequate hard-surface parking

Adequate hard-surface parking is good for all travelers, but for persons with mobility issues, this is a necessary accommodation. Dirt, grass, and gravel are very difficult for those with mobility issues, so should be avoided in parking areas. Properly installed pavers or finished concrete are ideal, and space must be considered to accommodate vehicles with rear and side ramps. Van-accessible spaces should be 11 feet wide with an additional access aisle that is 5 feet wide.

Remember, making your short-term rental accessible is not only good for those with a disability; it's good business for you.

For more information on short-term rental properties, visit www.BecomingRentABLE.com

