Universal Design Guide for ADA, FHA and UFAS Guidelines

At Merillat Cabinetry we understand that it can be challenging to determine what type of cabinetry should be utilized in order to help meet ADA, FHA and UFAS accessibility requirements. With the guidance of your architect, use this Universal Design Guide as a quick reference sheet to help you select the right Merillat Classic® product to meet those standards.

**THE PURPOSE OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN.** Universal Design provides accessible spaces that are easy and safe to approach, enter, and operate by a person with a disability or accessibility requirements. The design can be adaptable and easily convert from a conventional space to an accessible space.

**REQUIREMENTS ARE DEFINED BY THE GOVERNMENT.**

There are three primary laws that define kitchen and bath accessibility requirements in public and private facilities. Always remember that the burden of compliance rests with the person(s) who design and construct covered multifamily dwellings. It’s important to understand the standards below to set yourself apart from your competition, but you should always defer to the architect responsible for the design of the project since compliance with these laws is their responsibility.

**The Federal American with Disabilities Act (ADA)**
- Requires that all places of public accommodation be accessible. Applies to the accessibility of public facilities such as restaurants, hotels, and parks
- Applies to covered housing provided by public entities (state and local governments), such as housing on a state university campus
- Applies to public and common use areas at housing developments

**The Federal Fair Housing Act (FHA)**
- Accessibility requirements for private as well as public dwelling units and common areas
- Applies to all multifamily project types for sale or for rent (4+ attached units)
- Applies to all or some units depending on existence of an elevator

**Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS)**
- Applies to all housing projects with federal funding
- 5% of units must meet requirements if federally owned or a dormitory
- 5% of units must meet requirements on multifamily projects of 15 or more units if federally assisted

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1. American with Disabilities Act (ADA), TITLE III, 36.102 Application
2. Fair Housing Act (FHA), Sec. 804. [42 U.S.C. 3604] (5) (B)
3. Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS), 4.1.3 ACCESSIBLE HOUSING, SECTION 11
WHEN DESIGNING A KITCHEN OR BATH THAT IS REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH ADA, FHA and UFAS GUIDELINES
Bid exactly what the architect’s blueprints mandate with regard to interior elevations or guidance. If you do not have this guidance make sure you detail exactly what you designed, and require a sign off from the architect before moving forward with deliveries.

KEEP IN MIND
• A minimum of 30” wide is required for sink and vanity openings, whether the space is left open or if you’re installing a removable sink base.⁴
• To conceal the sink, install a valance or filler between the adjoining cabinets in an open underneath space.
• The bottom of the valance or filler must be at least 27” above the finished floor (AFF).⁵
• When the sink is open underneath, an appearance panel or plumbing cover is not a requirement. Plumbing is required to be insulated but not covered.⁷
• If the project is cost sensitive it would be best to keep these optional. If it is not cost sensitive, this item provides a nice finished look.
• 34” overall height for both cabinetry and countertops is required throughout most kitchens. If this requirement is in your provided bid documents, you can use 32 ½” high cabinetry in order to provide room for the countertop.
• Some guidelines require the 34” overall height to include the sink rim. If this is a requirement, it’s better to reduce the countertop thickness instead of the cabinetry.⁶
• 34” overall height is required in many bathrooms as well. Select our 32 ½” high Universal Access Base Cabinet with a 21” reduced depth modification in this instance.
• Not all kitchens and bathrooms complying with the ADA, FHA and UFAS Kitchen & Bath Guidelines require the use of 32 ½” high cabinets for a 34” height in the entire space. In some of these instances, it is acceptable to have 36” overall height throughout the kitchen with a removable sink base cabinet, and potentially a removable cabinet at a designated work surface area because of the acceptable clear floor space.

HOW DOES MERILLAT CLASSIC® CABINETRY HELP YOU WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS?
The Merillat Classic® product line offers many Universal Design options that provide trustworthy solutions for common design challenges. Not only do we manufacture stylish cabinets that are readily used in floor plans that meet current ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG)†, but we back our Merillat Classic product line with a 25-Year Limited Warranty, and ship them in days – not weeks. Merillat Classic® offers over 80 Universal Access SKUs that include:
- 32 ½” high Universal Access Cabinets that help achieve a 34” overall height with the countertop and sink installed
- 5 ½” toe kick that simulates a conventional kitchen but easily accommodates a person with accessibility requirements
- Universal Removable Sink Front easily converts from an enclosed sink base to an open accessible space
- Universal Access Panel can also be installed to conceal and protect drain and water lines that are exposed when removing the sink front
- Select cabinet depths are also available with tray and shelf options to make dishes, pots and pans even more accessible
- Universal Base Pull-Out Table provides a comfortable working station and maximizes counter space

For more information on our Universal Design options and how Merillat Cabinetry can support your business, please refer to your Spec Book or contact your Account Manager.

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⁴ ADA 306.3.5 / FHA PART TWO CHAPTER 7 KNEE SPACE AND PIPE PROTECTION / UFAS 4.24.3
⁵ ADA 306.3.1, FIG 306.3 / FHA PART TWO CHAPTER 7 KNEE SPACE AND PIPE PROTECTION / UFAS 4.24.3
⁶ FHA PART TWO CHAPTER 7 KNEE SPACE AND PIPE PROTECTION
⁷ ADA 606.3 Height / UFAS 4.34.6.5* SINK
† Masco Cabinetry LLC manufactures cabinets that can be readily used in floor plans that meet current ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG). The primary responsibility to make a space comply with these guidelines is on the architect or space planner. Merillat Classic products can be used to help satisfy the storage needs and accessibility requirements of disabled persons but depends on the knowledge, skill and creativity of the design professional and proper installation of these products.