

4. The Voting Area

Sections 11B-206, 11B-216, 11B-302, 11B-303, 11B-305, 11B-307, and 11B-308

At least one accessible route shall connect accessible building or facility entrances with all accessible spaces and elements within the building or facility. Therefore, elements in the voting area such as seats, tables, voting equipment, emergency exits, or similar elements, shall be located along accessible aisles that lead to an exit. (CCR, Section 11B-206.2.4.) See Figure 11.

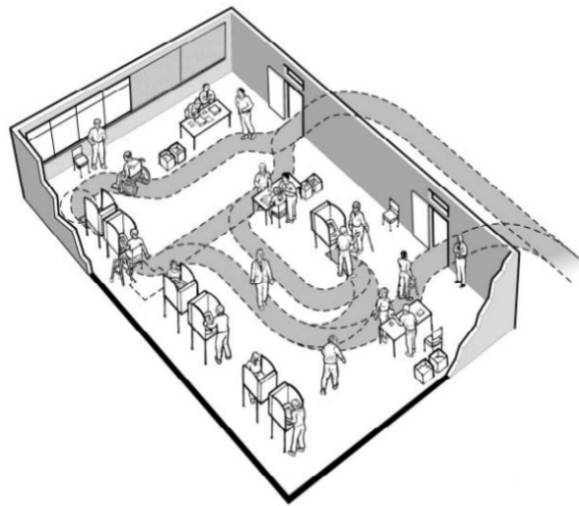


Figure 11: Accessible routes within a polling place voting area.

When voters enter the voting area, a stable, firm, and slip-resistant accessible route shall be provided. (CCR, Section 11B-302.1.) For that reason, hardwood or waxed floors that are not slip-resistant, deep pile carpet, loose carpets, or throw rugs are not recommended. For example, polished hardwood or waxed floors can become a slipping hazard, while deep pile carpet can be difficult for a person using a wheelchair to wheel across. Loose carpets or throw rugs can cause a tripping hazard.

In the event of an emergency, locked exit doors shall have accessible hardware so voters and poll workers may have an additional way to exit the building. Emergency alarms shall be placed in all public areas and meeting rooms. Alarms shall have both visual and auditory alerts when triggered. (CCR, Sections 11B-309.4 and 11B-404.2.7 and 11B-702.1.)

The voting area shall also be free of objects that protrude into the accessible route, such as lighting, shelves, or wall mounted telephones. When objects mounted on walls are placed at a height between 27 inches and 80 inches above the floor, they shall not extend into the accessible route more than 4 inches. (CCR, Section 11B-307.2.)

The 4-inch limitation provides a measure of safety when voters with limited vision are using the accessible route. See Figure 12 (a) for an example of an item protruding 4 inches into the accessible route.

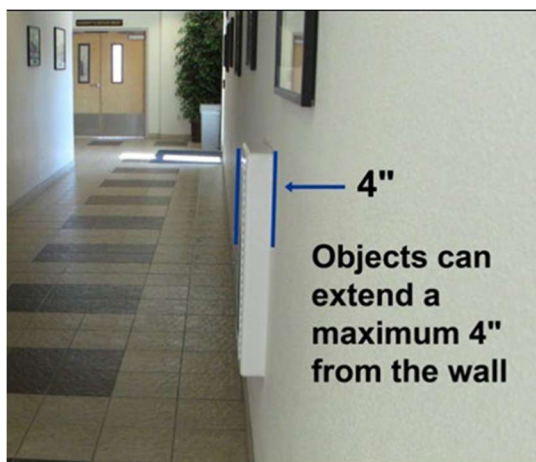


Figure 12 (a): Object protruding 4 inches into the accessible route between 27 inches and 80 inches high.

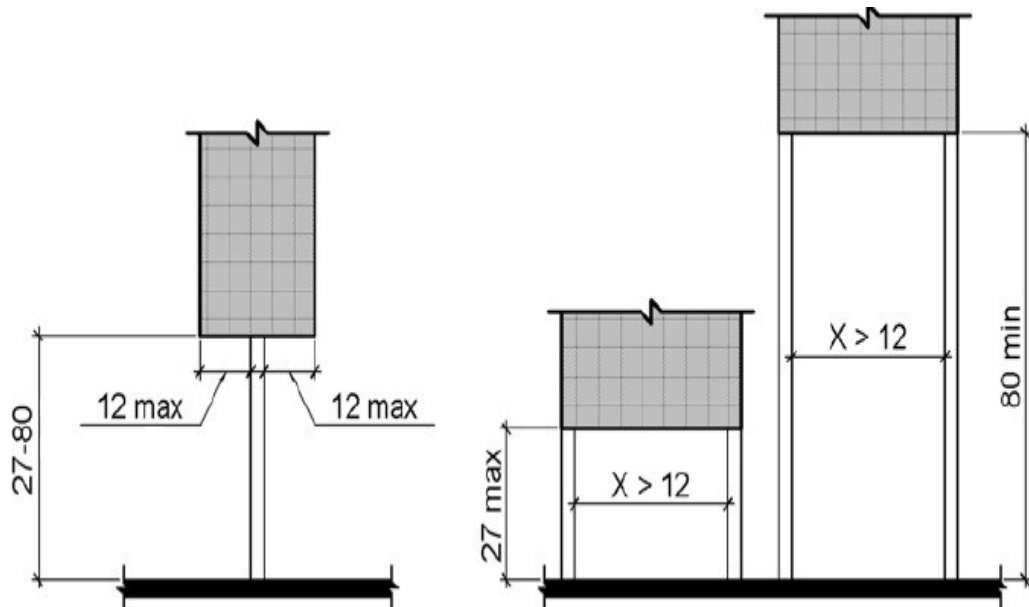
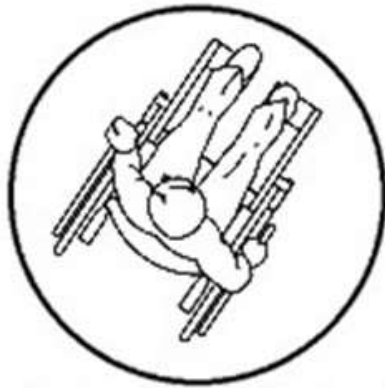


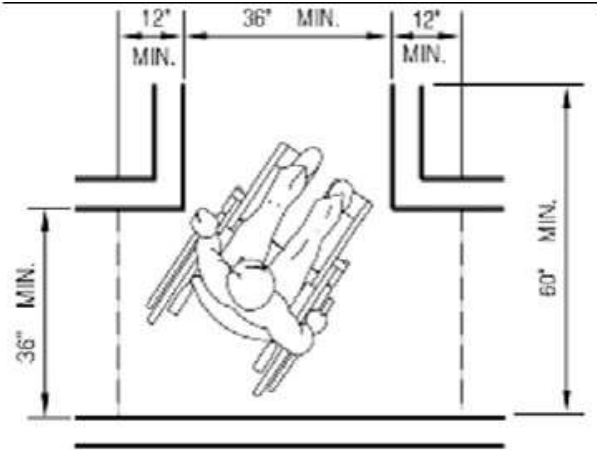
Figure 12 (a): Pole mounted objects protruding 12 inches into the accessible route between 27 inches and 80 inches high.

Pole mounted objects between 27 inches and 80 inches above the walking surface can extend into the accessible route up to 12 inches. (CCR, Section 11B-307.3.)

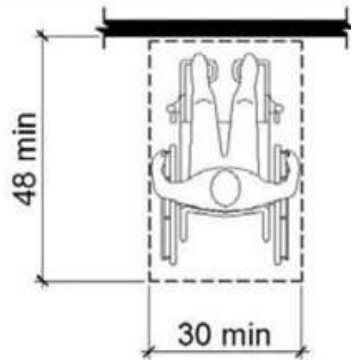
A person using a wheelchair for mobility will require a clear floor space of 60 inches in diameter or a T-shaped space to turn around and maneuver their wheelchair in the voting area. (CCR, Sections 11B-304.3.1 and 11B-304.3.2.) The minimum clear floor or ground space required to accommodate a person using a wheelchair shall be 30 inches by 48 inches. (CCR, Section 11B-305.3.) Provide a 60 inch turning space or T-shaped space in front of at least one voting station such as a voting booth or table and one accessible voting machine. See Figure 13.



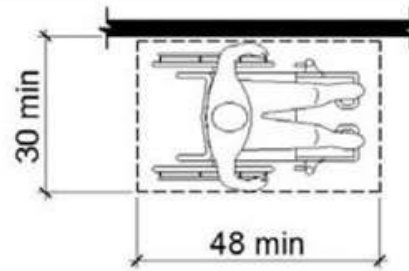
60 Inch Wheelchair Turning Space



T-SHAPED SPACE FOR 180° TURNS



forward



parallel

Figure 13: Diagrams showing the 60 inches turning space, the "T" shaped turning space, and the 30 inches by 48 inches clear floor space.

Accessible tables in the voting area shall be between 28 inches to 34 inches from the floor. (CCR, Section 11B-902.3.) Under each accessible table, there shall be a clear space at least 19 inches deep, 30 inches wide, (CCR, Section 11B-306.2.5.) and 27 inches from the floor as shown in Figure 14. (CCR, Section 11B-306.3.3 Exception 2.) The 30 inch by 48-inch clear floor space required for wheelchairs at tables may be combined with the knee space under tables and voting stations.

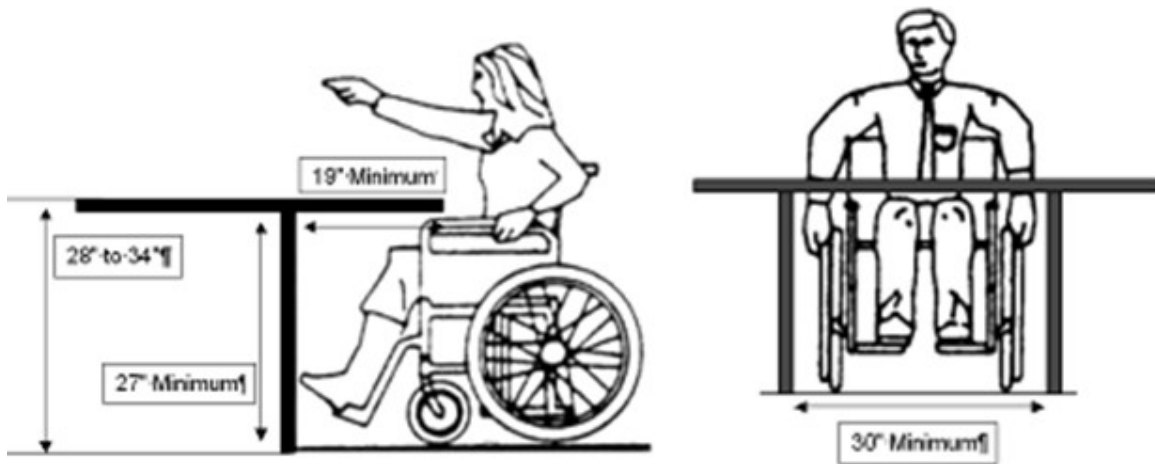


Figure 14: Individuals in wheelchairs showing unobstructed measurements for accessible tables.

Elderly voters and voters with disabilities shall be able to approach the voter sign-in or other writing tables from a forward or side/parallel position. Tables used as a base for voting equipment shall provide a forward or side approach as shown in Figure 15. The voting equipment shall be placed at a height where operable controls throughout their full range of movement are no higher than 48 inches above the floor for a front or side reach. (CCR, Sections 11B-308.2 and 11B-308.3.) This includes the highest voting target or menu buttons on the accessible voting equipment and all operable parts.

Providing both a forward and parallel approach to voting equipment, a sign-in station, or other accessible tables is not required by building codes or other accessibility standards. However, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires every county to make their program accessible to voters with disabilities. For this reason, the Secretary of State encourages counties to make both a forward and parallel approach available to voters with disabilities in order to provide a meaningful opportunity for voters with disabilities to vote independently and with privacy. (28 CFR 35.149 and 35.150(a).) See Figure 15.

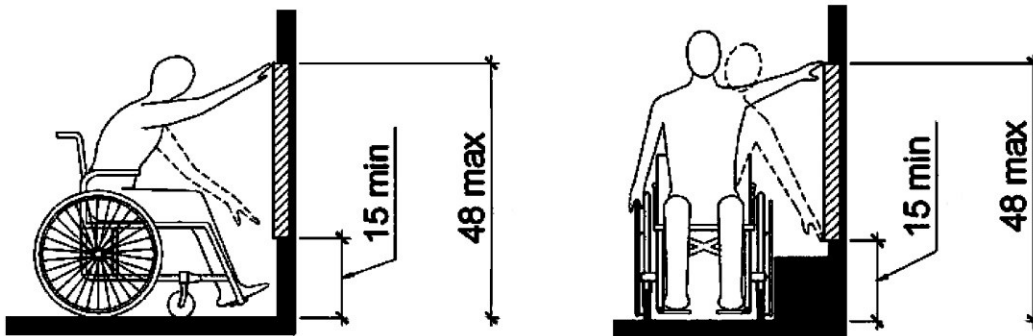


Figure 15: Individuals in wheelchairs showing unobstructed high and low, forward and side reach limit measurements.

Other requirements for the interior accessible route in the voting area may include the slope, cross-slope, overhead clear space, protruding objects, changes in level, and stable, firm, and slip-resistant surfaces, or other items as explained in Section 2 Accessible Route. Additional ways of providing accommodation in the voting area may include assigning a poll worker the duty of providing wayfinding throughout the day and during emergencies.