



The Accessible and Inclusive Workplace Handbook



Contents

Part 1		Part 2		Part 3	
Introduction		Good Practice for Accessible Design		Further Information	
Our Mission	4	Space Planning	13	Mail and Supply Rooms	29
Designing Workplaces for Everyone	5	Accessible Reach Ranges, Clearances and Protruding Objects	14	Food services/ Kitchenettes	30
Neuroinclusive Workplaces	7	Doors	15	Specialty and Recreation	31
Using this Document	9	Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment	16	Wellness, Meditation and Lactation Rooms	32
		Finishes and Patterns	17	Restrooms	33
		Use of Patterns	18		
		Visual Contrast	19		
		Acoustics	20		
		AV and Technology	21		
		Lighting and Services	22		
		External Landscaping and Pathways	23		
		External Spaces	24		
		Vertical Circulation	25		
		Entry Lobby and Reception	26		
		Wayfinding and Signage	27		
		Neighborhoods, Meeting, Training	28		

Part 1

Introduction



Our Mission

“Empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.”



Introduction

Designing workplaces for everyone

GOOD PRACTICE

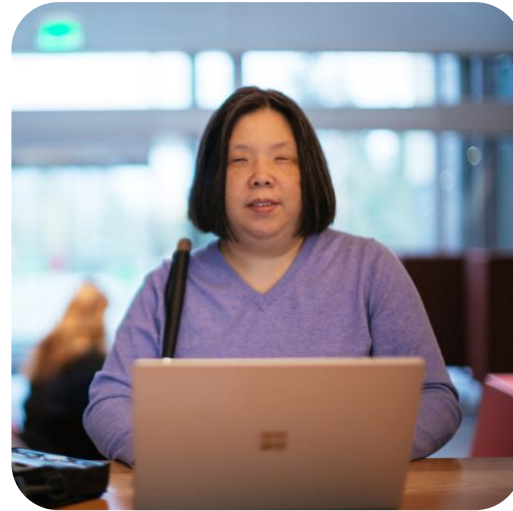


This document describes good practice to create accessible and inclusive environments. Designers carry the responsibility to understand how their design decisions impact users' interactions and where they may create barriers or mismatches in the workplace.

Understanding these mismatches in experience highlights opportunities to create solutions with utility and elegance for many people.

Human beings have a remarkable capacity to adapt, and by studying these adaptations, we gain valuable insights that inform more thoughtful, inclusive design.

WHY IT MATTERS



Designing for all building users ensures that spaces are accessible to the widest possible range of people and abilities - embracing the reality of human diversity.

All humans are constantly growing, changing, and adapting to the world around us. The goal is to create designs that reflect, respect, and support this ongoing evolution.

RE-DEFINING DISABILITY



Until recently, disability was seen as a result of an individual's condition, with limitations attributed solely to the person rather than their environment.

Today, we understand that **disability arises at the intersection between a person and an inaccessible environment**. Physical, cognitive, and social barriers emerge when there is a mismatch between what a person seeks to achieve and an environment that fails to support them.

This perspective, first embraced by the **World Health Organization**, presents unprecedented opportunities for design, business, and social innovation.

Introduction

Designing workplaces for everyone

DISABILITY WILL AFFECT EVERYONE



Everyone will experience a disability at some point in their lives. A disability can be acquired gradually or rapidly and can be a **permanent**, **temporary** or **situational** condition.

A temporary disability might be a broken leg or arm.

A situational disability might be a person using a buggy up or down stairs or someone struggling to hear a conversation in a noisy environment.



PHYSICAL DISABILITIES



The principles in this document address the following range of abilities with solutions that address our greatest opportunities.

- **Mobility:** person who uses a wheelchair or other mobility aid, has limited dexterity.
- **Vision:** person who is blind, person with low vision, a person who is color blind. (an inability or the difficulty for a person / persons to distinguish between certain colors).
- **Hearing:** person who is deaf, person with hearing loss.
- **Speech:** person who is non-verbal, person with a stutter, a person with Developmental Language Disorder.

WHY WE DESIGN FOR ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY



Businesses that provide an accessible and inclusive workplace:

1. Will attract a diverse workforce
2. Could support good employee retention
3. Improves employee wellbeing and performance
4. Provide an environment where people can feel empowered and in control

Introduction

Neuroinclusive workplaces

UNDERSTANDING NEURODIVERSITY



Neurodiversity is the term used to describe the **infinite variation** in human neurocognitive function.

Neurodiversity recognizes that the way we process and perceive information, speak, think, move, act, and learn varies from person to person. Neurological processing can also change over time due to factors such as brain injury, trauma, disease, or a change in mental health.

'THERE IS NO STANDARD BRAIN' *

**Thomas Armstrong PhD, The Power of Neurodiversity*



Many people exhibit multiple neurodivergent traits, making specific diagnoses challenging. Neurological profiles are often grouped as:

Neurotypical – individuals whose brain development and functioning align with what is considered typical or standard in society (around 80-85% of people)

Neurodivergent – individuals whose brain functions, learning styles and behaviors differ from what is considered typical (around 15-20% of people)

Neurodegenerative – sensory and cognitive changes that involve the progressive loss of structure or function of neurons, often leading to cognitive or physical decline

This guide looks at ways to design for inclusion for all.

NOT EVERY DISABILITY IS VISIBLE



We support cognitive, neural, and mental differences by enabling adaptable environments through thoughtful design, services, and technology. Designing for neurodiversity improves clarity, comfort, and usability creating workplaces that work better for everyone.

Cognitive: Supports different ways of learning, understanding, remembering, and processing information, ensuring spaces are intuitive and easy to navigate.

Neural: Acknowledges diverse neurological ways of thinking, sensing, and interacting with the environment, informing design choices that reduce sensory overload and support focus.

Mental: Recognizes the impact of emotional and psychological wellbeing on how people experience space, promoting environments that feel calm, supportive, and predictable

Introduction

Neuroinclusive workplaces

NEURODIVERSITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT



People experience and process their surroundings in different ways. Neuroinclusive design recognizes this diversity and encourages environments that offer choice, clarity, and sensory balance, supporting comfort, focus, and wellbeing for everyone.

Sound: Balanced acoustics and predictable sound levels support concentration and ease.

Visual Environment: Clear visual design, controlled lighting, and reduced clutter support focus and wayfinding.

Layout & Spatial Arrangements: Logical layouts and clear transitions reduce cognitive effort and support confident navigation.

Sensory Comfort: Consistent, adjustable temperature, air quality, materials, and low-impact smells support comfort and reduce fatigue.

By designing environments that are predictable, legible, and adaptable, we create spaces that support emotional regulation, sustained focus, and positive mental wellbeing benefiting all.

DESIGN STRATEGIES



Physical design strategies aim to avoid a "one-size-fits-all" mentality by providing choice, adjustability and customizability where possible.

Social design strategies aim to reduce discomfort and ambiguity by offering a variety of ways for people to interact with the environment, obtain information, and communicate with others.

Cognitive design strategies aim to simplify the environment in a way that feels straightforward and intuitive, enabling those who are neurodivergent to feel safe and in control.

NEUROINCLUSIVE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS



This Handbook provides considerations for accessible design to accommodate a range of sensory experiences and use a combination of physical, social, and cognitive design strategies to reduce the discomfort experienced by some in the workplace.

Introduction

Using this Document

The **Contents** page shows all the sections included in the document. These sections are organized into three main parts:

- **Part 1: Introduction**
- **Part 2: Good practice for Accessible Design**
- **Part 3: Further Information.**

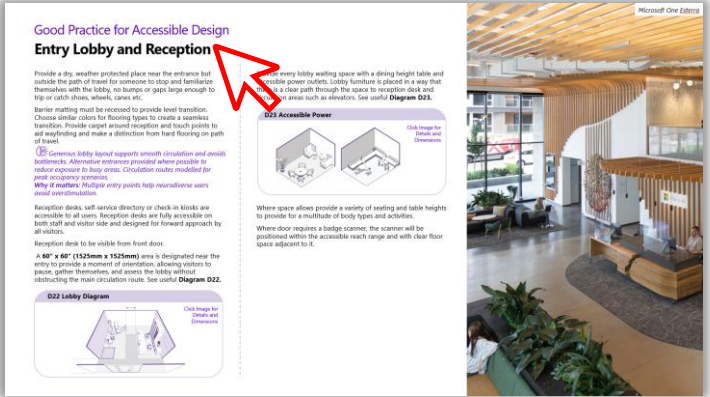
Each section listed in the table of contents includes a hyperlink, enabling direct navigation to the corresponding page and its content.

Click on any heading to navigate to the corresponding chapter. To return to the contents page, Click the chapter heading again.

Contents					
Part 1		Part 2		Part 3	
Introduction		Good Practice for Accessible Design		Further Information	
Our Mission	4	Space Planning	13	Wayfinding and Signage	29
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		Finishes and Patterns	17	Wellness, Meditation and Lactation Rooms	33
		Use of Patterns	18	Restrooms	34
		Visual Contrast	19		
		Acoustics	20		
		AV and Technology	21		
		Lighting and Services	22		
		External Landscaping and Pathways	23		
		External Spaces	24		
		Vertical Circulation	25		
		Entry Lobby and Reception	26		
		Wayfinding and Signage	27		
		Neighborhoods, Meeting, Training and MPR Spaces	28		

Contents page example, with each heading hyperlinked to its respective chapter. Navigate by pressing **Click** on a heading

Example page from 'The Standards' section, illustrating a typical layout. Click the chapter heading to return to the Contents page



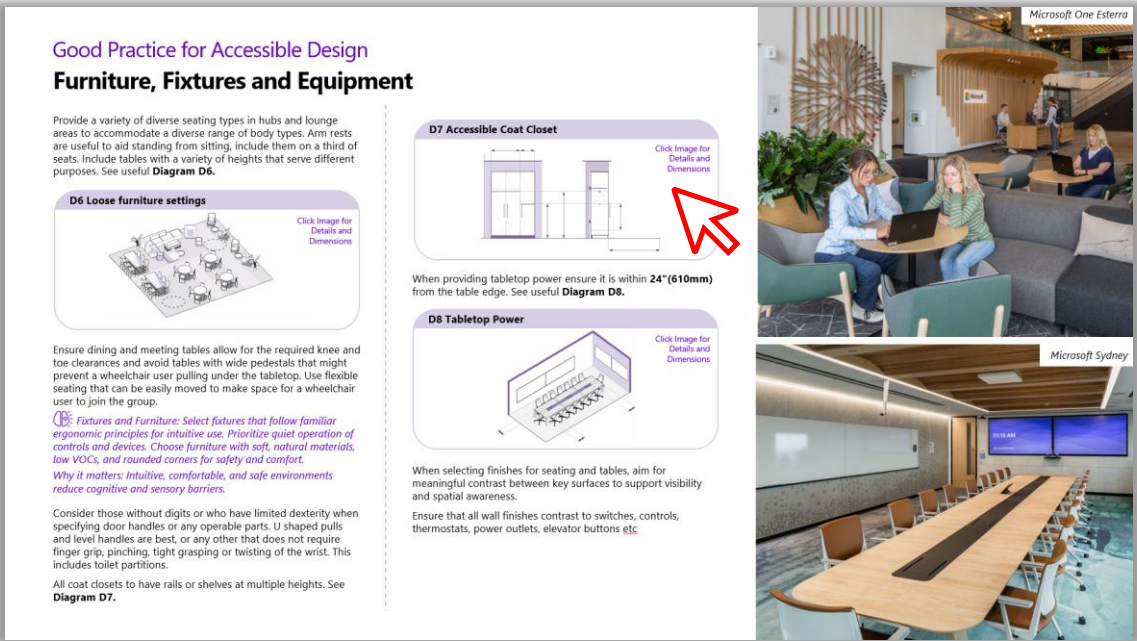
Introduction

Using this Document

PART 2 – GOOD PRACTICE FOR ACCESSIBLE DESIGN

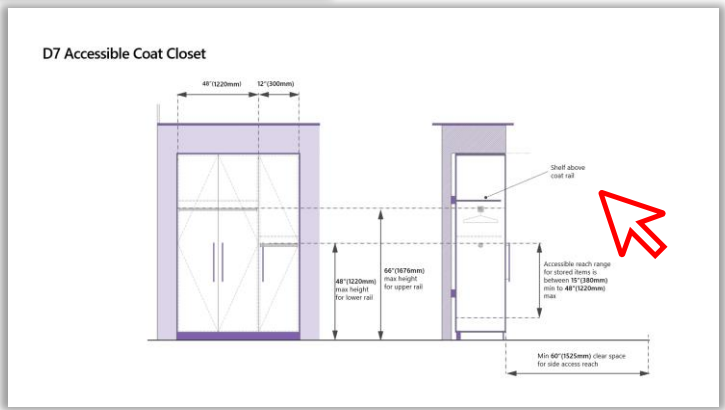
This section details information from the **Accessibility and Inclusivity Standards and Guidelines for Microsoft Workplaces**. These standards define the minimum requirements that must be met across all projects in Microsoft. They provide good practice for accessible design. Information is grouped by subject and supported by diagrams that visually illustrate key concepts.

Interactive diagrams are included throughout to enhance understanding. Click on any diagram to take you to a detailed version, complete with notes and dimensions in both metric and imperial units. Click the diagram again to return to the main page. A visual example is shown in the adjacent image.



Example page illustrating a typical layout. All diagrams are interactive and link to detailed versions that include notes and dimensions. Click on the diagram to see the corresponding detailed diagram.

Example page illustrating the detailed diagram. Click the diagram to navigate back to the main page.



Introduction

Using this Document

NEUROINCLUSION

Neuroinclusion guidelines are provided in *purple text* within Part 2 of this document, under the relevant clauses.



The purple brain symbol indicates **Neuroinclusion guidance** relating to the main topic of the chapter.



Good Practice for Accessible Design Space Planning

Building layouts should be designed to give a clear understanding and provide a logical sequence of activities.

☞ Organize building layouts with a logical, intuitive structure. Use rounded corners to improve sightlines into key areas to reduce visual confusion. Consider rounded corners in high traffic areas.

Why it matters: Intuitive layouts and rounded corners help people navigate buildings more safely and confidently by improving visibility and reducing confusion.

☞ Ensure entrances, exits, and reception areas are clearly visible from main circulation routes. Provide quieter alternative routes to help users avoid crowded or overstimulating zones.

Why it matters: Clearly visible access points reduce anxiety and cognitive load for neurodiverse users, supporting autonomy and confidence.

☞ Design transition zones that allow for gradual changes in sensory input - such as light, noise, and visual complexity - especially between different environments (e.g., from outdoors to indoors, or from busy to quiet areas).

Why it matters: Gradual sensory transitions prevent overload and support comfort for all users

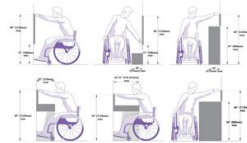
☞ Ensure generous corridor widths (meeting or exceeding accessibility standards) along primary routes to support easy movement and reduce stress. Design lighting to eliminate dark spots, unless intentionally used for specific functions. **Why it matters:** Clear, well-lit circulation supports safety and reduces anxiety.

Open-plan work areas should include accessible workstations in each neighborhood. When desks are arranged in banks of six, at least three of those workstations should be accessible. When desks are arranged in banks of four, at least two of the workstations should be accessible

Provide **60" (1525mm)** minimum for primary paths of travel, a **78" (1980 mm)** width is recommended for the main circulation route when space allows.

All enclosed rooms should accommodate a **67" (1700mm)** turning circle. **2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design** requirements should be referred to for all counter heights and depths, including correct knee and toe clearances. Minimum clearances for side access approach should also be met. Refer to **Diagram D2**.

D2 Accessible Reach Ranges



Click Image for
Details and
Dimensions

☞ Zone open collaborative spaces by activity, with variations in lighting, noise, and temperature. Provide a range of seating options to accommodate different sensory preferences.

Why it matters: Choice and zoning empower users to select environments that best suit their needs.

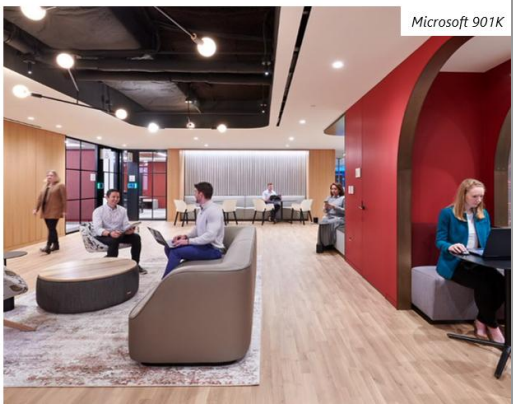
☞ Place support spaces (e.g., restrooms) in consistent locations across floors to aid navigation. Use glazed doors for visibility into large open-plan areas, helping users orient themselves.

Why it matters: Consistency and visibility reduce wayfinding anxiety and support spatial memory.

☞ In large open areas (like cafeterias), provide retreat spaces using high-backed seating, partial partitions, or lower ceilings to offer a sense of enclosure and respite. Refer to diagram D3.

Why it matters: Access to retreat spaces supports self-regulation and wellbeing for neurodiverse individuals.

Allow for **36" (915mm)** minimum circulation around furniture settings.



Example of a page from the 'Good practice for Accessible Design' section, showing a typical layout with neuroinclusion guidelines.

Part 2

Good Practice for Accessible Design

“Nothing about us without us!”

Partnership is important for good design.



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Space Planning

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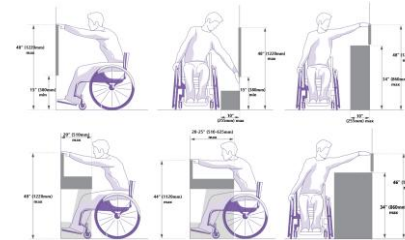
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D2 Accessible Reach Ranges



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

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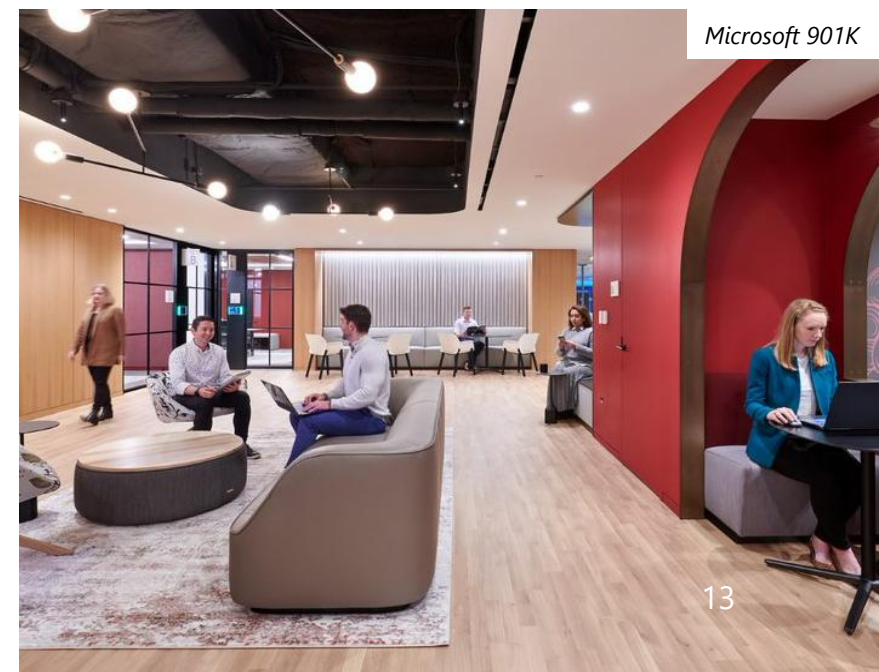
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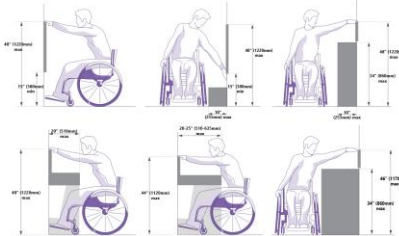
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Good Practice for Accessible Design

Accessible Reach Ranges

Wall mounted items, controls, buttons, etc. should meet accessible reach ranges as listed in **Diagram D2**.

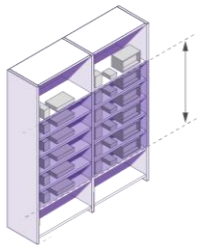
D2 Accessible Reach Ranges



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Adopt a vertical shelf stocking approach. By providing the same items at both a lower and higher shelf, supplies are in reach of both persons of taller and shorter stature or in wheelchairs. All elements should have a quantity stocked within accessible reach range **15"- 48" (380mm – 1220mm)**. See **Diagram D4**.

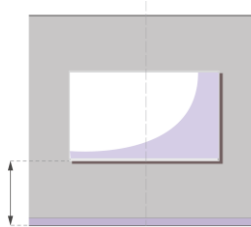
D4 Storage and Shelving



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Whiteboards and tackboards are to be mounted at **34" (860mm)** above finished floor level (AFFL). Please ensure the specified surface finish minimizes glare. See **Diagram D5**.

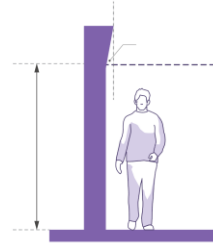
D5 Whiteboard Mounting Height



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Walls are plumb or minimally canted. Overhead slanted walls do not slope inward more than **4" (100 mm)** horizontally in **80" (2030 mm)** vertically. See **Diagram D17**.

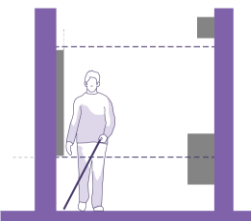
D17 Overhead Slanted Walls



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Any controls or wall mounted items such as switches, accessories, dispensers, hand dryers, shelves, hooks etc. do not protrude more than **4" (100 mm)** from the wall unless they have wing walls, are in a niche, or have a counter below. See **Diagram D18**.

D18 Protruding Objects



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Doors

External Doors

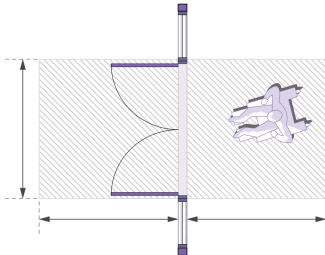
Main external entrance doors should preferably be automatic and have appropriate decals or manifestation to ensure visibility and safety.

Provide automatic opening at main entrances, single user restroom spaces and high traffic doors allowing sufficient time for users to operate mechanism and then navigate through door.

Primary entrances should be visually obvious from the sidewalk or drop-off.

Door(s) to have a compliant accessible level landing on both sides. Refer to local code for regional requirements. ADA recommendation is **60"x 60"**(1525mm x 1525 mm). See **Diagram D9**

D9 Accessible Level Landing



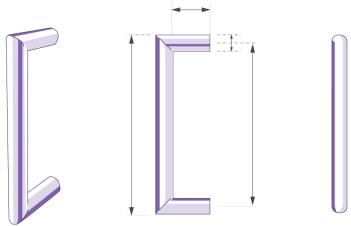
[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Location of primary entrance in new construction is tactilely perceivable underfoot from the point of entry to the site whether from the site sidewalk entrance or drop-off curb.

Internal Doors

Minimal effort or force should be required to manually open interior doors. Specify hardware that is usable with a closed fist or loose grip. Bars, pulls, and similar hardware should provide minimum knuckle clearance **1.5"(40mm)** to facilitate gripping. See **Diagram D10**.

D10 Door Handles

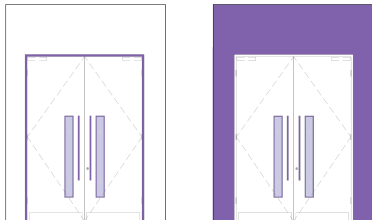


[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Access control, buzzers, doorbells, call buttons are positioned between **36-48"**(914-1220 mm)

Ensure visual contrast around door openings. Minimum **30 LRV** difference. See **Diagram D13**.

D13 Visual Contrast Around Door Openings



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

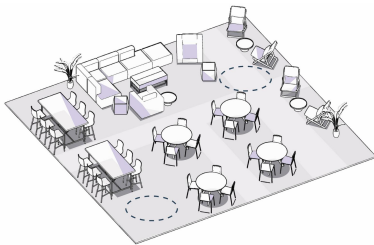


Good Practice for Accessible Design

Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment

Provide a variety of diverse seating types in hubs and lounge areas to accommodate a diverse range of body types. Arm rests are useful to aid standing from sitting, include them on a third of seats. Include tables with a variety of heights that serve different purposes. See **Diagram D6**.

D6 Loose furniture settings



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Ensure dining and meeting tables allow for the required knee and toe clearances and avoid tables with wide pedestals that might prevent a wheelchair user pulling under the tabletop. Use flexible seating that can be easily moved to make space for a wheelchair user to join the group.

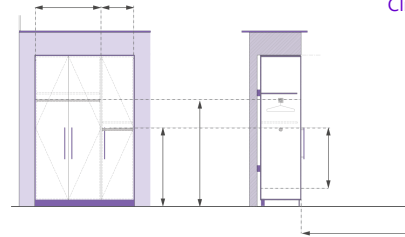
 **Fixtures and Furniture:** Select fixtures that follow familiar ergonomic principles for intuitive use. Prioritize quiet operation of controls and devices. Choose furniture with soft, natural materials, low VOCs, and rounded corners for safety and comfort.

Why it matters: Intuitive, comfortable, and safe environments reduce cognitive and sensory barriers.

Specify door handles and operable components that support use by people with diverse dexterity and grip capabilities. U-shaped pulls, lever handles, or equivalent designs that do not require finger grip, pinching, tight grasping, or wrist twisting provide more inclusive access. This guidance applies equally to toilet partitions and other operable elements.

All coat closets to have rails or shelves at multiple heights. See **Diagram D7**.

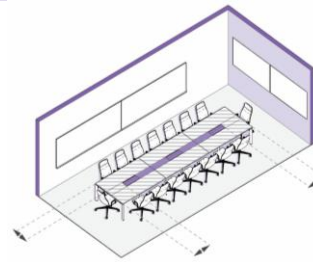
D7 Accessible Coat Closet



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

When providing tabletop power ensure it is within **24" (610mm)** from the table edge. See **Diagram D8**.

D8 Tabletop Power



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

When selecting finishes for seating and tables, aim for meaningful contrast between key surfaces to support visibility and spatial awareness.

Ensure that all wall finishes contrast to switches, controls, thermostats, power outlets, elevator buttons etc.



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Finishes and Patterns

All materials and finishes are very low or no VOC.

 Provide acoustic glazing to external-facing areas to reduce environmental noise; Select floor finishes without high-contrast or visually busy patterns; incorporate external shading to control glare; specify non-slatted blinds (no venetian styles); that may create flicker or strobe effects; Include perimeter seals to prevent unwanted light seepage and maintain consistent lighting.
Why it matters: Managing sound, glare, and visual complexity creates calmer spaces.

 Choose wall finishes that withstand regular contact without degrading or becoming unhygienic. Consult Facilities teams to confirm materials meet cleaning and maintenance standards.
Why it matters: Some neurodiverse individuals feel more grounded when they can touch their surroundings. Durable finishes ensure this experience remains safe and hygienic.

To ensure glazing is visible by all provide contrasting strips or patterns on all glass doors and glazed partitions, which contrast with background colors seen through the glass in all light levels.

Choose wall and floor finishes that maintain clear visual perception and do not create patterns or effects that could be confusing or disorienting.

 Use muted colors or nature-inspired tones for general areas. Offer a mix of stimulating and muted décor for varied sensory preferences. Apply neutral palettes in wellness rooms for relaxation.
Why it matters: Color influences mood and sensory comfort. Natural tones often promote calmness.

 Offer upholstery options with smooth, soft fabrics; avoid rough textures. Use flooring with similar tones to adjacent surfaces and avoid shiny trims.
Why it matters: Smooth consistent materials reduce sensory discomfort and visual distraction, creating a calmer more inclusive environment.

Transitions between materials are smooth with no tripping hazards. Use color contrast intentionally throughout the design to ensure members of the low vision and blindness community can easily navigate their surroundings.

 Use incremental LRV changes for flooring transitions. Avoid black flooring in Elevators / lifts, as it may appear as a void.
Why it matters: Abrupt color changes can be disorienting.

 Avoid bright motifs on dark backgrounds or vice versa. Limit repetitive designs on large surfaces (e.g., tiles, mats, stair treads). (Refer to p.24 for further details).
Why it matters: High-contrast and, or repetitive patterns can overwhelm hypersensitive individuals.

 Avoid stripes, geometric patterns, or evenly spaced high-contrast elements in receptions, walkways, stairs, and quiet zones.
Why it matters: Busy patterns in high-traffic zones can cause visual confusion.



Microsoft Trondheim

Good Practice for Accessible Design

Use of Patterns

Pattern DOs

- Use soft, low-contrast geometric patterns on flooring to guide movement without overwhelming the senses.
- Maintain similar tonal contrast when transitioning between materials (e.g., carpet to tile)
- Keep large wall areas plain or minimally textured where focus and communication are important
- Use subtle linear patterns on walls to indicate direction or to help identify zones
- If patterns are used, ensure they are muted and large-scale rather than small and repetitive.
- Keep ceiling patterns or panels minimal to avoid visual clutter in the upper field of view.
- Use consistent, predictable repetition of shapes to provide visual stability
- Select textiles with gentle variation rather than bold prints.
- Consider tactile texture as an alternative to visual pattern when adding sensory interest.

Pattern DON'Ts

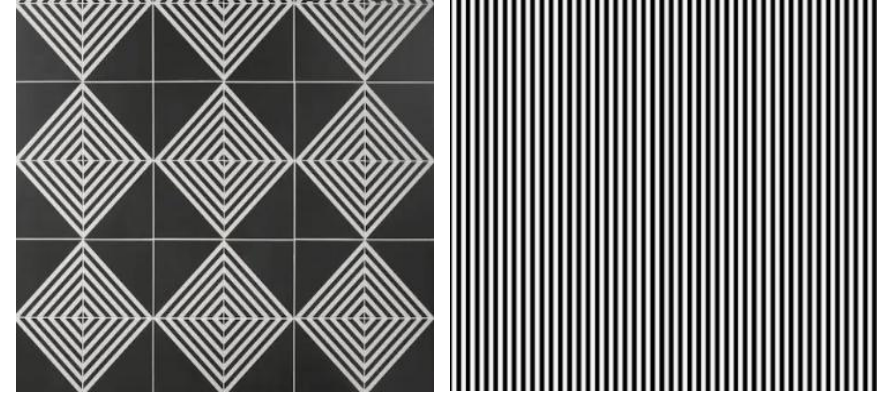
- Avoid alternating tile directions or complex motifs
- Avoid high-contrast stripes or chequerboard designs
- Avoid visual complexity near doorways, signage, or key information points
- Avoid the use of small, repetitive patterns that can be visually overstimulating.
- Avoid visual competition between finishes - e.g., patterned upholstery and patterned flooring together

Patterns in interiors strongly affect how people perceive and navigate a space, and complex or high-contrast designs can be especially overwhelming for neurodivergent individuals. Because the brain processes visual information so quickly, these patterns can create visual "noise," distort depth perception, or appear to flicker, leading to discomfort or disorientation.

Aim to use patterns intentionally and in moderation to enhance comfort, clarity, and wellbeing - adding subtle visual cues, warmth, and identity without creating sensory overload.

Designers are advised to choose low-contrast, natural, and consistent patterns; test materials in real lighting; involve neurodivergent users in reviews

Apply patterns purposefully in small, manageable areas to keep spaces intuitive and inclusive.



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Visual Contrast

Visual contrast refers to the perceived difference between two adjacent surfaces or building elements. Effective visual contrast helps people distinguish between different planes, navigate a space safely, and identify key features such as doors, steps, handrails, and signage.

Applying color contrast intentionally throughout the design provides a powerful tool for those with low vision or blindness to navigate their surroundings and map the layout of a room more clearly. Emphasize contrast at main touchpoints such as receptions and kitchenettes.

As a rule of thumb, a **minimum 30-point LVR difference** between adjacent surfaces generally provides good visual contrast.

Contrast furniture and seating pads with flooring and use color contrast to highlight power outlets and controls. Provide decals on glazed doors and partitions which contrast with background colors seen through the glass in all light levels.

Whilst using contrast to highlight some areas, avoid high contrast repetitive patterns on walls or floors as these can create visual illusions for some.



Application Of Visual Contrast

Use contrast for:

- Doors and door frames (vs. surrounding walls)
- Door handles, controls, and switches (vs. background surface)
- Steps, stair nosings, and escalator edges
- Walls and floors (moderate contrast to define boundaries)
- Signage text and symbols (vs. background)
- Hazards and obstacles (columns, projections, glazing)
- Grab rails and handrails (vs. adjacent walls)
- Furniture seat pads (vs. flooring)
- Tabletops (vs. seat pads and flooring)

Avoid strong contrast for:

- Adjacent floor finishes (to avoid perceived steps or barriers)
- High-contrast patterns on floors, walls, or ceilings
- Glossy or reflective surfaces (can distort contrast through glare)
- Large vivid color areas (can cause sensory overload)
- Ceilings (contrast not generally required)

Note - Information taken from:

- PAS_6463_2022 - Design for the mind - Neurodiversity and the built environment – Guide
- BS-8300-1 (Annex B) and BS-8300-2 (Annex B)



Microsoft Shinagawa



Microsoft Malta Skyparks

Good Practice for Accessible Design

Acoustics

Avoid using all hard surfaces throughout the space.

 *Plan quiet zones deeper within the building away from noisier social spaces. Where appropriate use buffer spaces (e.g., lounges or corridors) to ease transitions.*

Why it matters: *Gradual transitions in noise levels helps users adapt and can reduce stresses associated with noise.*

Utilize suitable acoustic solutions to support average level conversations to be clearly understood. Ensure reverberations are kept to a minimum.

Where feature stairs are clearly intended as a primary means of travel between levels, the stair treads should be constructed from materials that reduce footfall noise to maintain acoustic comfort.

Eliminate spaces with echoes.

Aim to minimize noise from building systems and equipment to create a calm, comfortable environment - particularly for individuals sensitive to auditory stimuli.

 *Hand dryers to target below 70dB. Consult with appropriate teams to support with the requirements per project*
- *Mechanical Design Teams: Select HVAC systems with low noise output and add acoustic insulation in ductwork as required*
- *FM Teams: Regularly check for repetitive sounds (e.g., dripping taps, ticking clocks) and remediate where possible. Where feasible in the design, Enclose copy rooms to contain equipment noise.*
Why it matters: *Persistent or sharp sounds can be distracting and distressing.*



Good Practice for Accessible Design

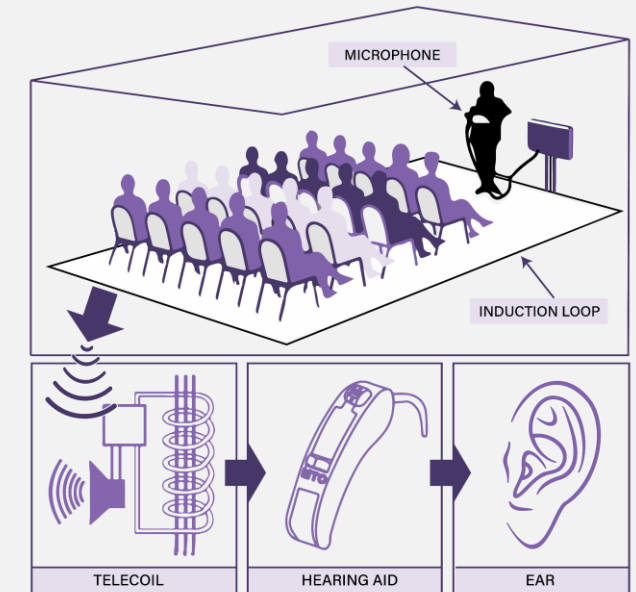
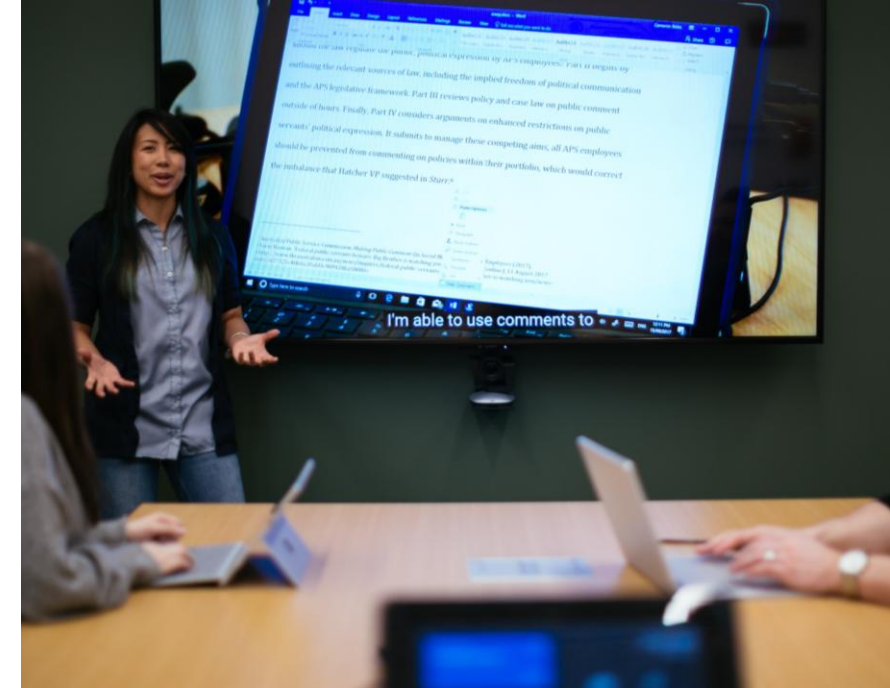
AV and Technology

Involve everyone in the conversation. Early engagement with AV teams is recommended to confirm technical details and specifications.

Provide audio and closed captioning for all visual presentations and TTY/closed captioning for all audio presentations.

Ensure assistive listening system capability is integrated in conference rooms.

Provide technology that enhances or at a minimum, doesn't interfere with hearing aid equipment.



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Lighting and Services

Mount lighting and temperature controls within the accessible reach range. For control switches/call buttons, etc. to be mounted between **36 - 48" (914 - 1220 mm)**. See **Diagram D12**.

D12 Device Mounting Heights



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Consider the materials specified and how they can affect noise and acoustics of a space. Avoid using too many hard materials in spaces.

 Use ceiling-mounted luminaires with beam angles 20-45° as these could help reduce glare and long shadows. Add uplighting and vertical surface lighting for balance as appropriate for design. FM teams: Regularly check for flickering lights and remediate.

Why it matters: Proper fixture selection reduces glare and harsh contrasts.

 Sensors to maintain 10% background illumination, transitioning to full brightness over 3-5 seconds. (Align with Sustainability requirements where specified).

Why it matters: Sudden light changes can startle users.

 Avoid rapidly changing or moving light installations (seizure risk). Minimize reflective surfaces and eliminate shadows where possible. (Shadows can be perceived as obstructions by some).

Why it matters: Lighting impacts sensory experience and orientation.

Avoid fluorescent lighting.

 Consider brighter lighting in work areas, softer lighting in corridors. Provide user-controlled lighting in enclosed spaces. **Why it matters:** Different tasks require different lighting levels.

Frequently used stairs: Select tread finishes that reduce footfall noise and support acoustic comfort.

Building services and equipment: Minimize operational noise by coordinating early with facilities teams to specify the quietest viable equipment.

Designers should consider lighting that best supports function and use in different space types. This ensures suitably lit spaces that aid with lip reading, sign language and the functions to be carried out in the space.

Intentionally design lighting to ensure there is no glare or excessive contrast between bright and ambiently lit spaces.

Provide adjustable and dimmable task lights as appropriate at workstations.

Design to provide varied thermal environments within the building, enabling occupants to select spaces that align with individual comfort requirements

 Enclose tea points and kitchen areas near workstations to contain odors. Ensure ventilation systems prevent odor transfer from kitchenettes, canteens, restrooms, and technical spaces. Avoid chemical masking agents, which can trigger sensory discomfort. **Why it matters:** Strong smells can be overwhelming for neurodiverse individuals and impact concentration.



Microsoft Atlanta



Good Practice for Accessible Design

External Landscaping and Pathways

Place accessible parking as close as possible to the building entrance.

Ensure there is access for vehicle drop off/ collection outside the building.

Ensure accessible parking stalls and required access aisles are clearly identified with contrasting striping and compliant signage to support safe vehicle entry and exit.

 Pathways are wide enough to meet accessibility standards (e.g., minimum clear width). Pathways follow natural, flowing lines for intuitive movement. Entrances are clearly marked and easy to identify (transparent/ glazed doors or canopies provided where appropriate for visual preview).

Why it matters: Wide, flowing routes reduce stress and support intuitive navigation.

Provide level access or lowered curb with a detectable warning from roadside to main entrance for passenger loading.

If change of direction may be required along an external main circulation route provide a minimum **67" (1700 mm)** turning radius to accommodate people using power chairs

 Design external lighting with gradual intensity changes between zones. Use downward-directed lighting, including downward lighting on bollards and handrails, to reduce glare especially for individuals at lower viewing heights. Aim for about 100 lux variation per meter or transition zone.

Why it matters: Gradual lighting changes reduce sensory stress and aid orientation.

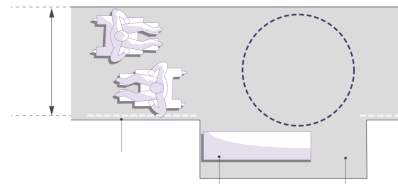
Provide accessible pathways which have visually contrasting, cane detectable edges or raised borders. Path of travel should always be well lit during working hours

 Avoid using reflective surfaces at street level. Metallic elements should be reviewed for heat retention and touch safety. **Why it matters:** Reducing glare and heat hazards supports sensory comfort and physical safety.

Level changes, however small could constitute a barrier to anyone with a mobility disability. Ensure paths provided are non-skid, stable surfaces. Provide curb ramps and curb cuts with truncated domes to alert level change

Minimum clearance along path of travel is **44" (1120mm)**. Where space allows provide **72" (1828mm)** to allow for two wheelchairs or motorized scooters simultaneously. See **Diagram D20**

D20 Main Exterior Circulation Route



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Where a change of direction is required provide turning radii of **83" (2110mm)** to accommodate people using power chairs. Provide rest locations adjacent to path of travel every **98 feet (28 meters)**.

Paths of travel should have contrasting, tactilely distinct edge detail and be well lit with downward directed light to avoid creating glare for those of shorter stature. Provide visually contrasting, cane detectable edges or raised borders.

Provide the lowest slopes possible (**1:20 or less**). Where required provide ramps (**maximum gradient 1:12**) that have been thoughtfully integrated into the landscape design with building code compliant accessible handrails and tactile indicators at landings and top of ramp.



Good Practice for Accessible Design

External Spaces

Provide a variety of seating and table types and heights to accommodate a multitude of body types and activities.

 *Where possible, position relaxing outdoor areas away from high-stimulation sources such as traffic, mechanical equipment, or extract ducts.*

Why it matters: Reducing sensory overload helps create environments that feel safe and restorative.

 *Select plants that are free from sharp thorns and strong scents to ensure comfort for all users.*

Why it matters: Avoiding harsh textures and strong smells helps create a more welcoming and sensory-friendly environment.

All outdoor spaces and balconies should be accessible, with easy access through doors, with a level threshold and adequate circulation space for a person using a mobility device. Provide wide walking surfaces.

Provide accessible features that allow those with disabilities, including mobility impairments, to participate and spectate when designing outdoor facilities.

 *Include pockets of greenery across the site to provide shade and areas for relaxation. Offer both quiet zones for reflection and open spaces for gentle movement. Major building clusters should offer green spaces ideally with two distinct areas - one for calm and one for activity.*

Why it matters: Green spaces support wellbeing and offer calming, inclusive environments for rest or gentle activity.

Design outdoor amenities such as decks, terraces and other such spaces so they can be reached, entered and used by all people.

 *Incorporate natural materials and biophilic elements indoors. When using nature imagery, limit size and frame images to avoid creating a false sense of being outdoors, which can be disorienting for some.*

Why it matters: Natural elements indoors can replicate the calming benefits of outdoor environments.

Provide covered spaces for shade.

Ensure exterior amenities apply the same accessible provisions as interior spaces.



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Vertical Circulation

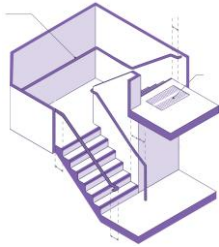
Buildings & spaces should be accessible either by level entry, elevator or compliant ramp access, ensuring equal access to spaces for people with disabilities, including mobility device users.

Stairs

Where stairs are provided for level changes ensure there is a compliant ramp adjacent for universal access.

Stairs require accessible handrails that extend **12" (300mm)** past the edge of the final tread and return to wall to avoid snagging on clothes. Provide color contrasting nosing on top and face of treads and color contrasting landings. Place tactile indicators at the top of staircases. Provide good lighting on staircases. See **Diagram D21**.

D21 Stairs



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Provide even, glare-free lighting to clearly illuminate the full stair path of travel.

Avoid uplighting or exposed light sources that may cause glare, reduce contrast or impair visibility for stair users.

Ramps

If ramps are obviously intended to be a primary means of travel between levels, the ideal slope is $\leq 1:20$. Landings to have a rest location outside the main path of travel.

Provide handrails at accessible height, extending **12" (300mm)** past final tread and returning to wall to avoid snagging clothing.

Elevators / Lifts

Locate elevators adjacent or near stairs that are used as main circulation.

Provide audio announcements in elevators.

Install vertical actuators alongside a touch screen with a tactile call button below for destination dispatch elevators.

Elevator cars should be large enough to accommodate a **67" (1700mm)** turning circle, have illuminated buttons with braille and audio announcements for every floor. Use braille on elevator call buttons.

Provide clear directional and other wayfinding signage in elevator lobbies and stair discharge locations.

Ensure wayfinding for emergency exits, restrooms etc. is intuitive.



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Entry Lobby and Reception

Provide a dry, weather protected place near the entrance but outside the path of travel for someone to stop and familiarize themselves with the lobby, no bumps or gaps large enough to trip or catch shoes, wheels, canes etc.

Barrier matting should provide a flush, level transition to avoid creating a tripping hazard.

Where recessing is not feasible, barrier matting may be surface-mounted provided edges are securely fixed, beveled, and compliant with accessibility requirements.

Select similar tones between adjacent flooring materials to support a seamless visual transition.

Provide carpet at reception areas and key touchpoints to support wayfinding and clearly differentiate these zones from hard-surface primary paths of travel.

 *Generous lobby layout supports smooth circulation and avoids bottlenecks. Alternative entrances provided where possible to reduce exposure to busy areas. Circulation routes modelled for peak occupancy scenarios.*

Why it matters: Multiple entry points help neurodiverse users avoid overstimulation.

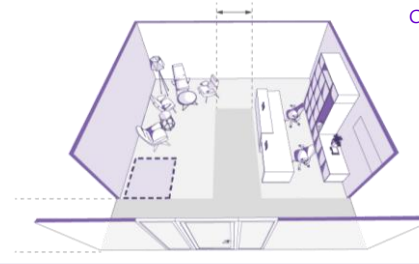
Reception desks, self-service directory or check-in kiosks are accessible to all users.

Reception welcome desks designs should be fully accessible on both staff and visitor side and designed for forward approach by all visitors.

Reception desk to be visible from front door.

A **60" x 60" (1525mm x 1525mm)** area is designated near the entry to provide a moment of orientation, allowing visitors to pause, gather themselves, and assess the lobby without obstructing the main circulation route. See useful **Diagram D22**.

D22 Lobby Diagram

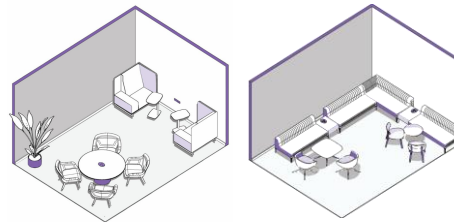


[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Provide lobby waiting space with a dining height table and accessible power outlets.

Arrange lobby furniture in a way that provides a clear path through the space to reception desk and circulation areas such as elevators. See **Diagram D23**.

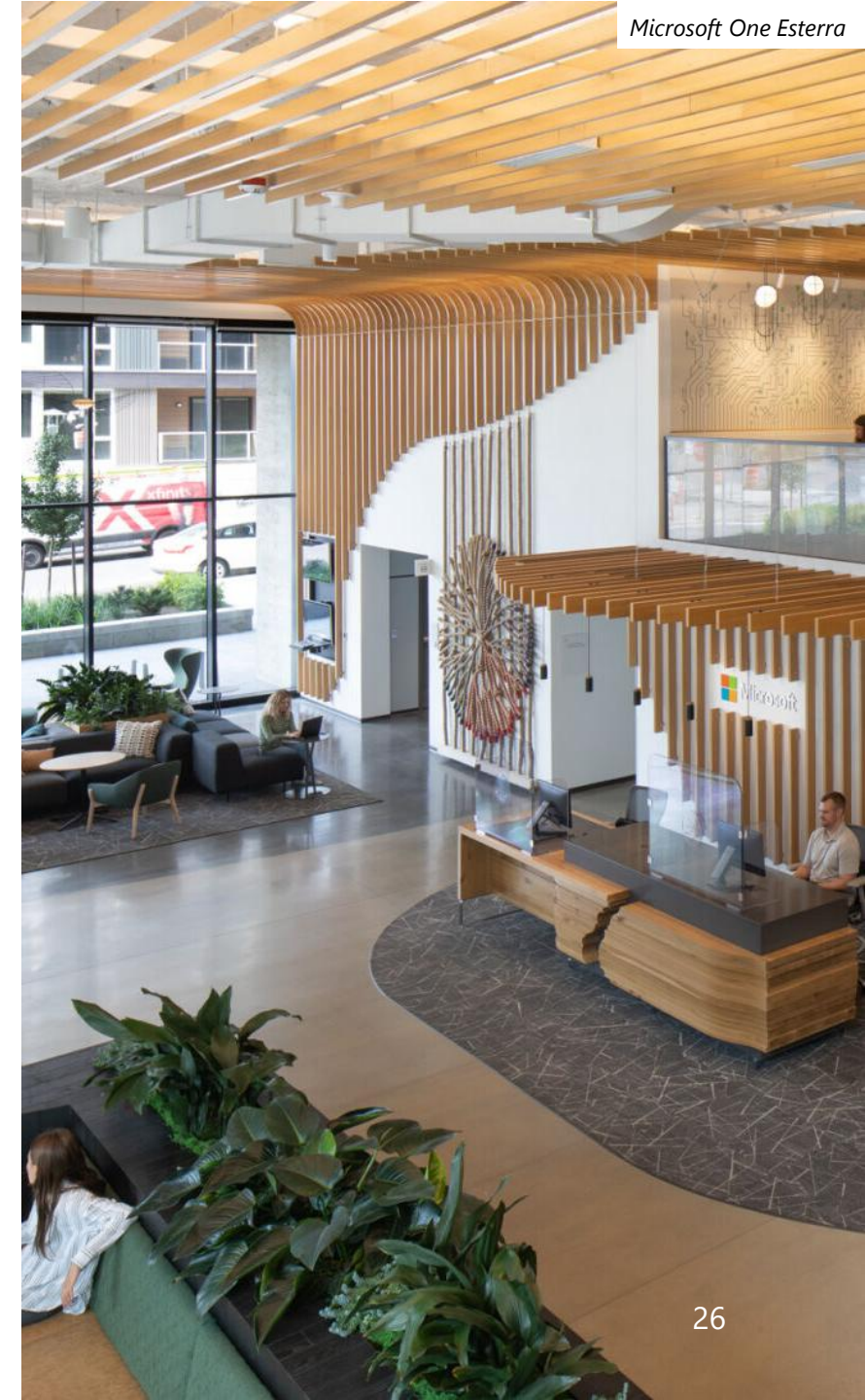
D23 Accessible Power



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Where space allows provide a variety of seating and table heights to provide for a multitude of body types and activities.

Where badge-controlled access is provided, position scanners within the accessible reach range and ensure compliant clear floor space is provided adjacent to the control.



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Wayfinding and Signage

Interior Wayfinding

All room and wayfinding signage should be designed with the right contrast levels and mounted at suitable heights for visibility from a distance and at accessible reach range at room destination entrance.

Remember flooring, lighting and finishes can all aid wayfinding in addition to signage.

Provide high-contrast large font labelling and braille for equipment and amenities.

Provide visual or audible announcement warnings prior to loud alarms.

Exterior Wayfinding

Create an interactive map directory that can be used with a personal device such as a phone, to help with navigation; provide guidance on what is available on site.

Apply a **Tactile Wayfinding System** externally using tactile walking surface indicators to provide cane detectable and trackable material that contrasts with surrounding hardscape both tactually and visually to:

- Create vehicular and pedestrian edge detection/delineation
- Create point to point navigation
- Create a means to locate accessible signage for white cane users and others with blindness or low vision.



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Neighborhoods, Meeting and Training Spaces

Specify operable blinds for exterior windows to manage direct light and distractions.

Place workstations away from distractions caused by people walking by or regular opening/closing of doors. Utilize visual and acoustic barriers where necessary to protect working areas.

Design gradual transitions between spaces that are used for different types of activities or work modes.

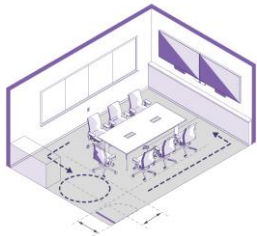
Provide collaboration spaces in a variety of sizes to meet various meeting needs.

 *Support user comfort by communicating when spaces will be busy (e.g., via digital displays, apps, or signage) and engaging users before making layout changes. During room reconfigurations, offer a variety of seating choices to accommodate diverse needs.*

***Why it matters:** Predictability helps neurodiverse users plan and reduces stress, while choice supports autonomy.*

Ensure unobstructed circulation is maintained around meeting tables to accommodate users of mobility devices, including under typical seated occupancy conditions. See **Diagram D26**.

D26 Conference Room Circulation



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

If using keypad locks, provide locks with raised keys from the field and a standard **3 x 4** number layout (if there is no braille on the keys) that mimics a phone keyboard. A raised dot on the number **5** is helpful for touch orientation.

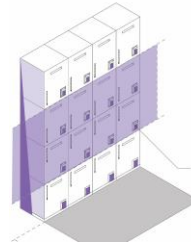
Ensure suitable and adequate circulation around locker spaces to accommodate the user and other traveling behind them if lockers are situated within an open area. See **Diagram D25**.

Provide accessible lockers that are available within **15"-48"** (**380mm – 1220mm**)

Locker should have; the same size and volume; tactile numbering and braille signage; **60" wide x 48" (1520mm x 1220mm)** in front of doors for accessible side approach.

Choose finish for the lockers that gives clear definition between lockers either by using contrasting colors for doors or contrasting ironmongery/locks.

D25 Lockers



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Mail and Supply Rooms

Accessible counter required in supply rooms. Accessible knee and toe clearances apply. Minimum width of counter **36"(914mm)**. See **Diagram D27**.



Adopt vertical shelf stocking by providing identical items at both lower and higher shelf levels to support equitable access across a range of body types, heights and mobility needs

Provide large-font, high contrast labels with braille at all supply storage levels to support independent identification and use.



Microsoft Sao Paulo



Microsoft Lima

Good Practice for Accessible Design

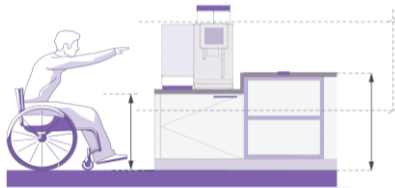
Food Services / Kitchenettes

Ensure that the path of travel around self-serve stations, ordering and pick-up counters, and seating areas is accessible. Provide enough clear space for people using wheelchairs, other mobility aids, or service animals, especially when chairs are pulled out and occupied.

Introduce “Accessibility Mode” for checkout and ordering systems, that includes high contrast monitor displays and large font, tactile navigation options with headphones providing audio descriptions.

All products and amenity controls to be within accessible reach. Standard counter height is **34" (860mm)**. Lower standard height counters to place controls within accessible reach if necessary. See **Diagram D28**.

D28 Accessible Amenities



[Click Diagram for Details and Dimensions](#)

Provide wheel-in sink areas with clear knee and toe clearances.

Locate faucets, soap dispensers and towel dispensers within accessible reach and specify automatic (touch free) operation for fixtures.

Sink counters should not exceed 24" (600mm) in depth and 34" (860mm) in height.

Where large dining or hub spaces are likely to become crowded, locate shielded quiet nooks along the perimeter of the space.

Design nooks as acoustically treated or partially enclosed areas that offer refuge from noise and visual activity. Ensure at least, one nook is accessible to wheelchair users and provide a variety of seating options to support different bodies, postures and sensory needs.

Provide electrical outlets, amenities, and controls at accessible heights and locations, ensuring they are easy to reach and identify.

Specify finishes and labelling with clear visual contrast to adjacent surfaces, and include raised, large-format text and braille for all applicable amenities and controls.



Microsoft East Campus

Good Practice for Accessible Design

Specialty and Recreation

Specialty and recreation spaces, including shower rooms, are essential workplace amenities that support wellbeing, and equitable participation.

Providing accessible, private, and well-designed shower facilities enables people to travel actively, manage health needs, and transition comfortably between work and personal responsibilities. These spaces are a core component of inclusive workplaces that support diverse bodies, identities, and work patterns.

Recreation Rooms

Use loose, portable furniture in specialty and recreation spaces so layouts can adapt and clear accessible paths of travel can be maintained at all times.

Provision of Accessible Showers

Where showers are provided, include at least one accessible shower for each gender and one shower suitable for use by all genders, aligned to local code requirements.

Privacy, Dignity & Changing Areas

Design shower and locker room partitions to provide both privacy and accessibility, using doors or curtains as appropriate.

Provide a private dressing / changing area directly in front of the shower to allow users to transfer, dry, and dress with dignity.

Wet–Dry Separation

In accessible showers, install curtains or screens between wet and dry zones to prevent water from reaching mobility devices, seating, or personal equipment.

Accessible Clearances & Reach

Maintain accessible reach ranges, knee and toe clearances, and reachable controls and accessories throughout locker, changing, and shower rooms, including benches, lockers, hooks, and fittings.



Microsoft Bangalore

Good Practice for Accessible Design

Wellness, Meditation and Lactation Rooms

These are essential spaces that enable people to care for their physical, mental and emotional well-being while remaining active participants in the workplace.

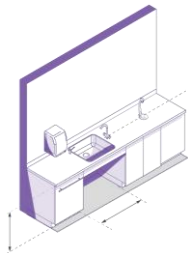
Provide quiet visually peaceful spaces as an alternative to high energy spaces.

Support or wellness spaces should have reduced stimuli and be clearly delineated as to their purpose.

Where there are a choice of spaces available, ensure users know there is an alternative space if their first choice is occupied.

Provide a front approach accessible sink where required under space type requirements. Provide an accessible under-counter refrigerator in Lactation rooms. See **Diagram D30**.

D30 Accessible Sink



Click Diagram for
Details and
Dimensions

OE: Wellness rooms could be designed as flexible environments that users can customize to meet their sensory needs. Preferred to locate near restrooms for convenience & away from the main circulation to provide privacy and sound/ visual isolation. Avoid locating on the perimeter to prevent daylight penetration or provide blackout shades.

Why it matters: Ensuring flexibility, accessibility, and sensory control creates a comfortable, private environment that supports users' physical and emotional well-being.

Placing wellness spaces in outdoor areas creates the opportunity to connect with nature. As a minimum aim to provide a view outside or design with natural materials.

OE: Design spaces using muted colors and organic, nature-inspired forms to support calm and visual comfort. Rooms should be free from intrusive odors and background noise. Provide curtains or equivalent treatments to exterior windows and door vision panels to support privacy and reduce visual distraction. **Why it matters:** Calming, sensory-friendly finishes and enhanced privacy help reduce stress and promote a sense of safety and relaxation.

OE: Provide lighting for a soft, comfortable ambiance. Light levels should be substantially lower than the rest of the office, with wall-mounted user controls for personalization. Supplemental items like fans and blankets may help individuals regulate temperature. Movement-triggered lighting might illuminate gradually to avoid startling users. **Why it matters:** Soft, adjustable lighting and temperature control help individuals manage sensory comfort and create a soothing, low-stimulation environment

OE: Choose furniture that can be easily repositioned, with options like floor cushions and pillows for those who feel safer closer to the ground. Upholstery may vary to suit different tactile preferences, avoiding rough fabrics. Items that are easily breakable are best removed. **Why it matters:** Adaptable, safe, and tactilely comfortable furniture supports diverse sensory needs and helps users feel secure and at ease.

OE: Wellness rooms should prioritize immediate access, with occupancy status visible. Provide user-controlled sound or music options and a small shatter-resistant mirror to support comfort, privacy, and readiness to re-enter shared environments **Why it matters:** Transparent availability and personalized sensory options promote ease of use, comfort, and self-confidence for users returning to shared spaces

OE: Where a dedicated wellness room is not available, an alternative quiet space could be offered with similar sensory considerations. **Why it matters:** Providing an alternative quiet space ensures everyone has access to a supportive environment for rest and sensory regulation.

Provide comfortable seating that is adjustable, or provide a variety, to accommodate all body types. Install customizable temperature and lighting controls.



Microsoft East Campus – Building 5 and 6 ©Tim Griffith



Good Practice for Accessible Design

Restrooms

It is paramount that adequate, easy to locate facilities are provided - this is an important accessible feature.

Avoid flicker, glare and inconsistent light output; traditional fluorescent systems often fail to meet this requirement.

 *Lighting in accessible restrooms could remain illuminated for extended durations to support users who may require additional time. Provide occupancy sensors within each cubicle and in circulation areas to ensure consistent, reliable coverage and avoid unintended lighting shut-off*
Why it matters: *Flickering or sudden darkness can cause anxiety.*

Specify touch-free or low-effort faucets and soap dispensers at all restroom washbasins to support accessibility and hygiene while meeting water-efficiency objectives. Prioritize faucet placement for easy reach in all instances.

Flushing systems should support accessible use and water conservation; where automatic flushing is not provided, manual controls must be easy to operate, within accessible reach ranges, and require minimal force.

Provide wheel-in washbasins within all washroom areas to ensure equitable access.

Occupancy indicators should communicate status using both color and text to support clear understanding for a wide range of users.

Provide male, female and all-gender accessible restrooms and include sanitary waste disposal in all types of accessible restroom.

Ensure restrooms are centrally and conveniently placed and ideally in same position on each floor, including near lobby spaces for visitors.

Cubicle locking mechanisms to be accessible to those who have limited to no dexterity.

Configure restroom entrances to protect user privacy by ensuring there is no direct line of sight into toilet facilities from the main doorway.

Where entrances are adjacent to open or high-traffic spaces, provide shielding, offsets or screens to prevent views into the restroom interior.

Hand dryers should be designed to avoid drips on the floor, minimizing slips and trips.



Part 3

Further Information



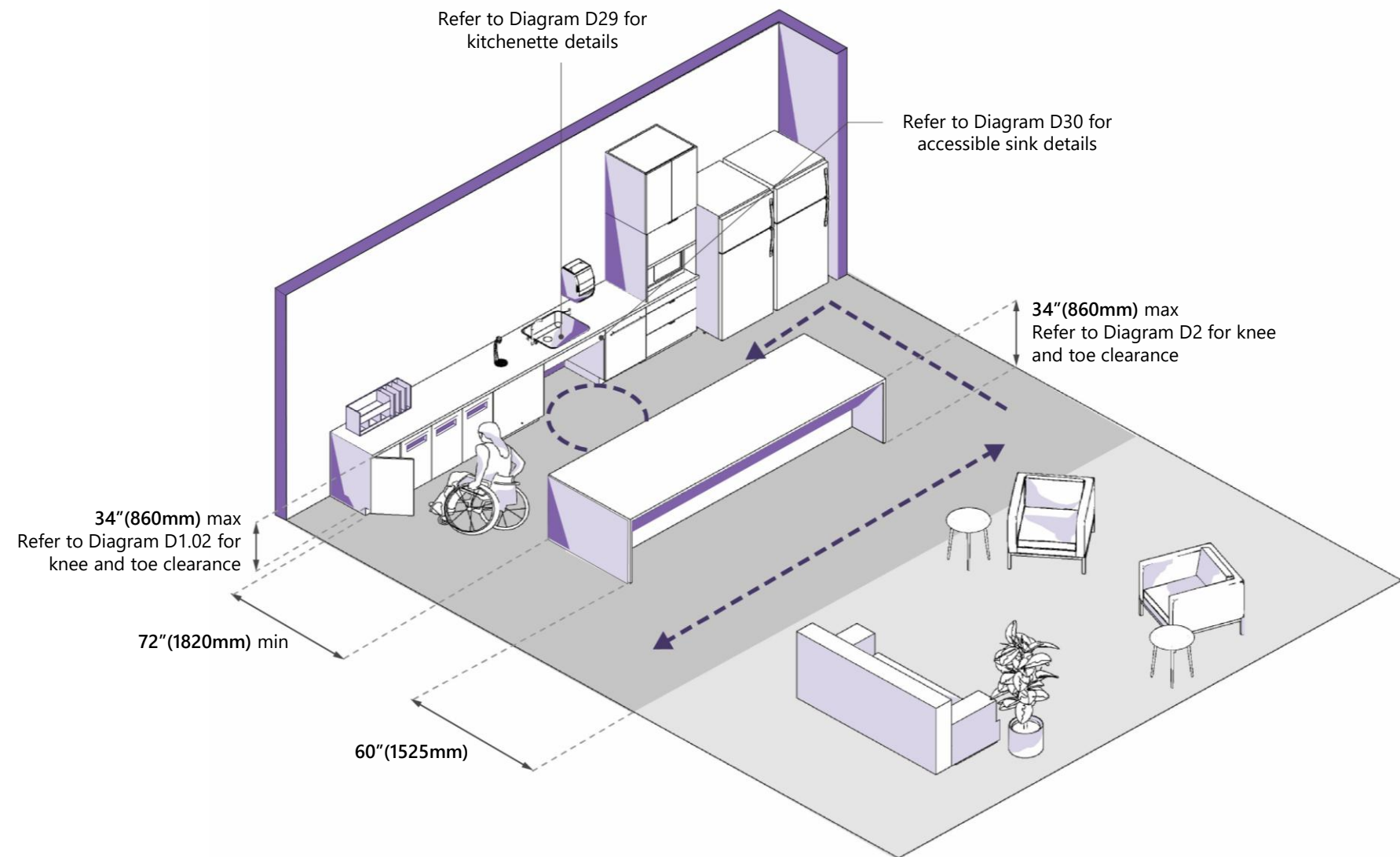
Diagrams

The following diagrams are a good practice guide. Refer to local code when designing spaces.

No	Title
D1	Kitchen Layout
D2	Accessible Reach Ranges
D3	Retreat Spaces
D4	Storage and Shelving
D5	Whiteboard Mounting Height
D6	Loose Furniture Settings
D7	Accessible Coat Closet
D8	Tabletop Power
D9	Accessible Level Landing
D10	Door Handles
D11	Clear Opening Width
D12	Device Mounting Heights
D13	Visual Contrast around Door Openings
D14	Full Height Handle
D15	No Sharp Edges
D16	Glass Manifestation Height
D17	Overhead Slanted Walls
D18	Protruding Objects

No	Title
D19	Lowered Curb
D20	Main Exterior Circulation Route
D21	Stairs
D22	Lobby Diagram
D23	Accessible Power
D24	Reception Desk
D25	Lockers
D26	Conference Room Circulation
D27	Mail Room / Supply Room Counter
D28	Accessible Amenities
D29	Kitchenettes
D30	Accessible Sink

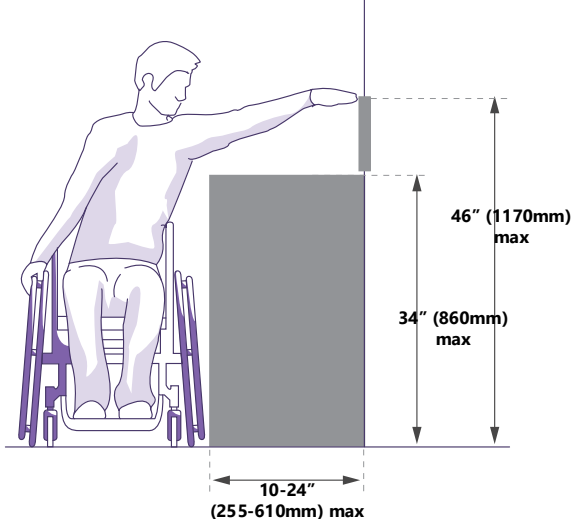
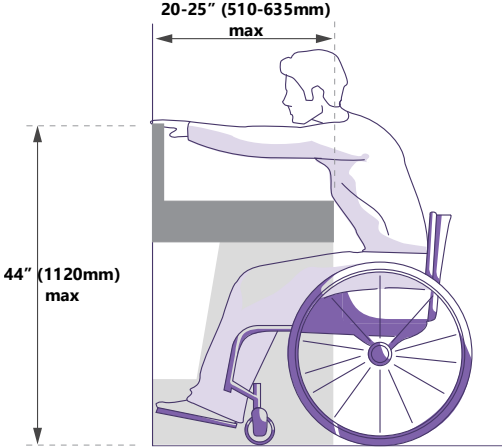
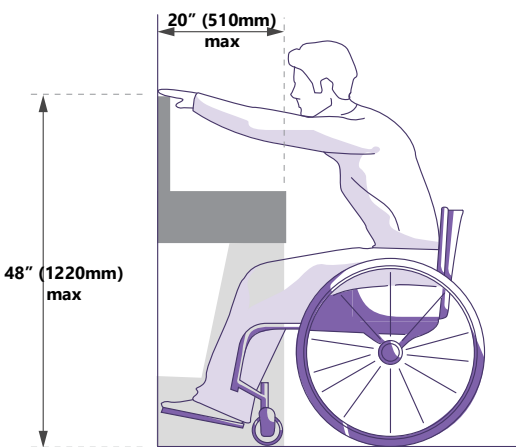
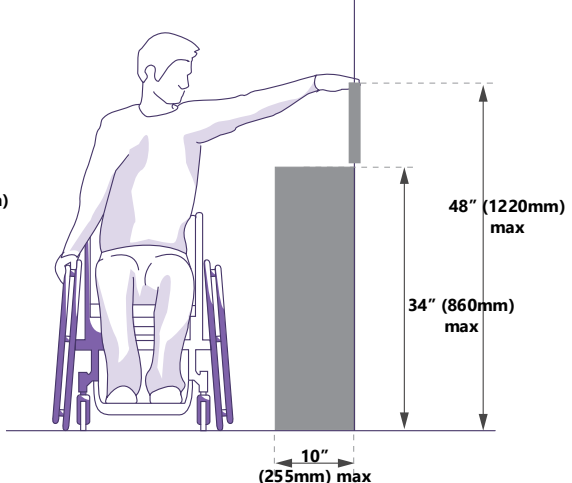
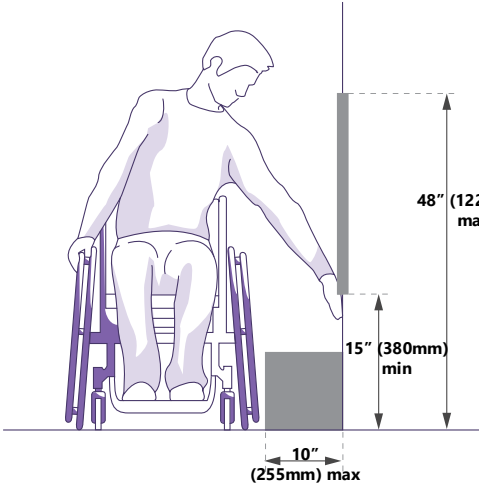
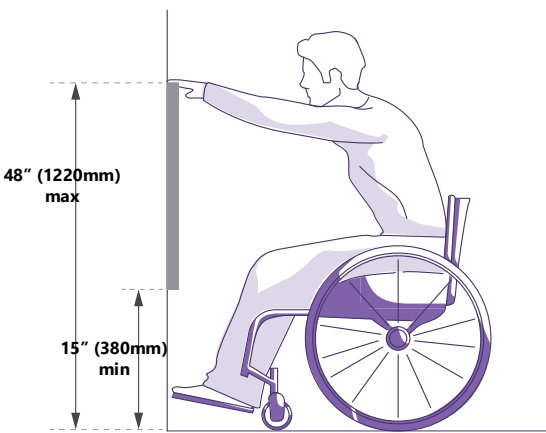
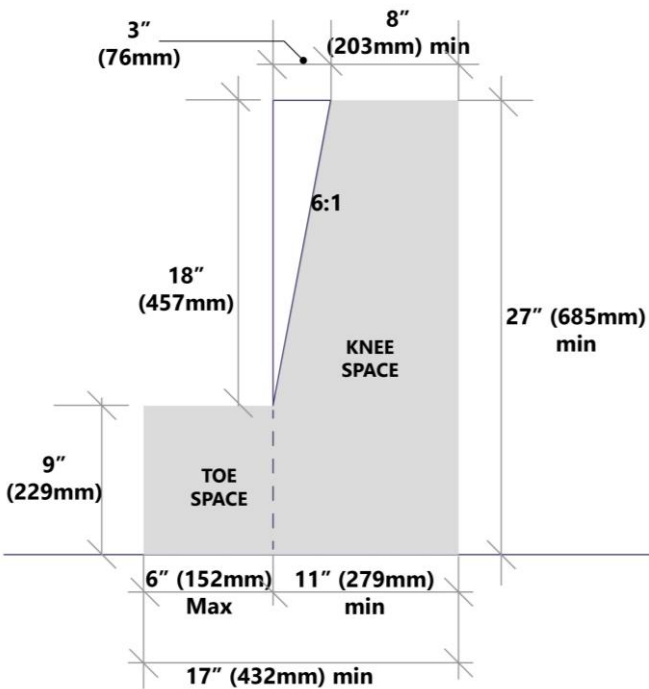
D1 Kitchen Layout



D2 Accessible Reach Ranges

[Click Here to return to Page 13 Space Planning](#)

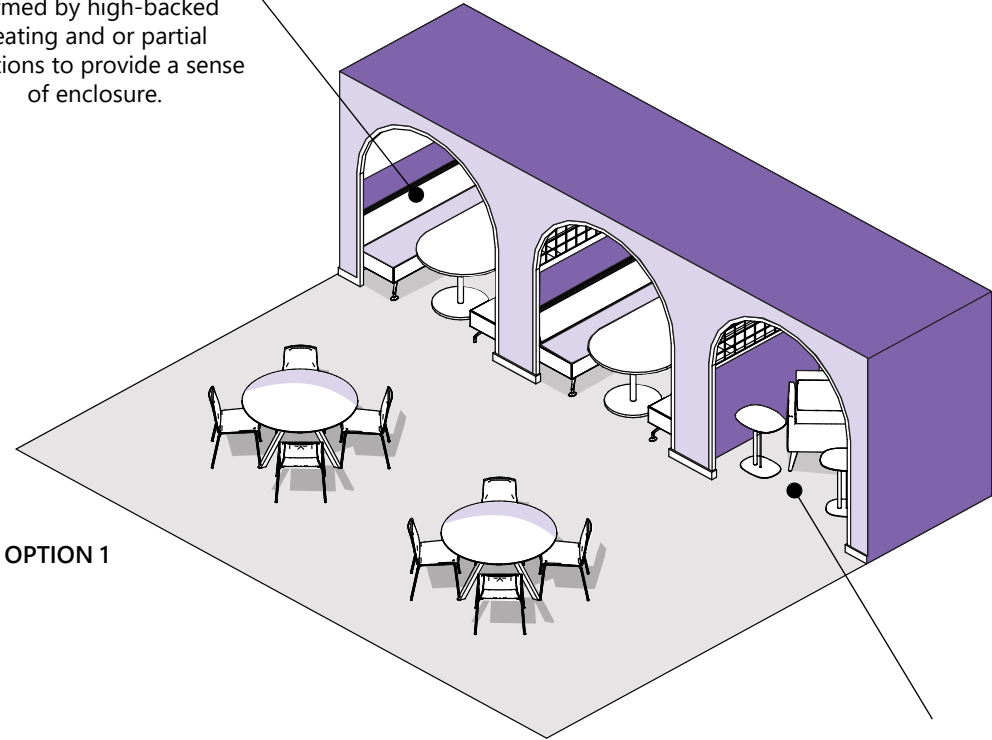
[Click Here to return to Page 14 Accessible Reach Ranges](#)



For further guidance refer to ADA 306 and 902. <https://www.access-board.gov/ada/#ada-902>
<https://www.access-board.gov/ada/guides/chapter-3-clear-floor-or-ground-space-and-turning-space/#knee-and-toe-space>

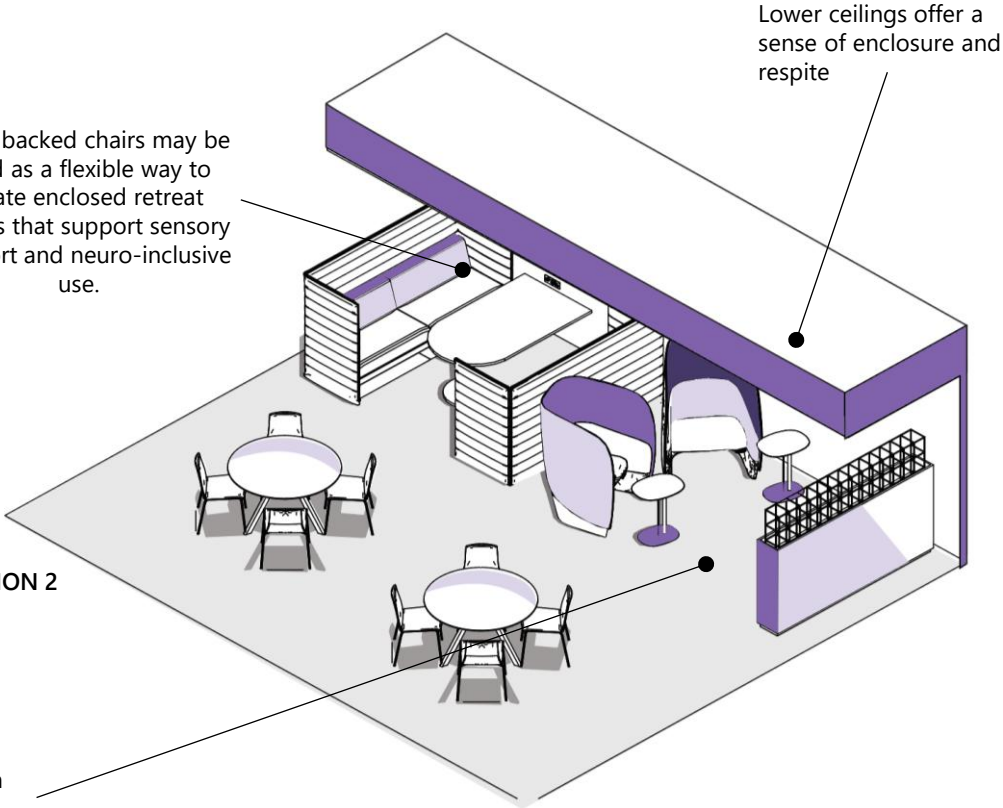
D3 Retreat Spaces

Design spaces to meet area requirements in large open areas; include retreat spaces formed by high-backed seating and or partial partitions to provide a sense of enclosure.



OPTION 1

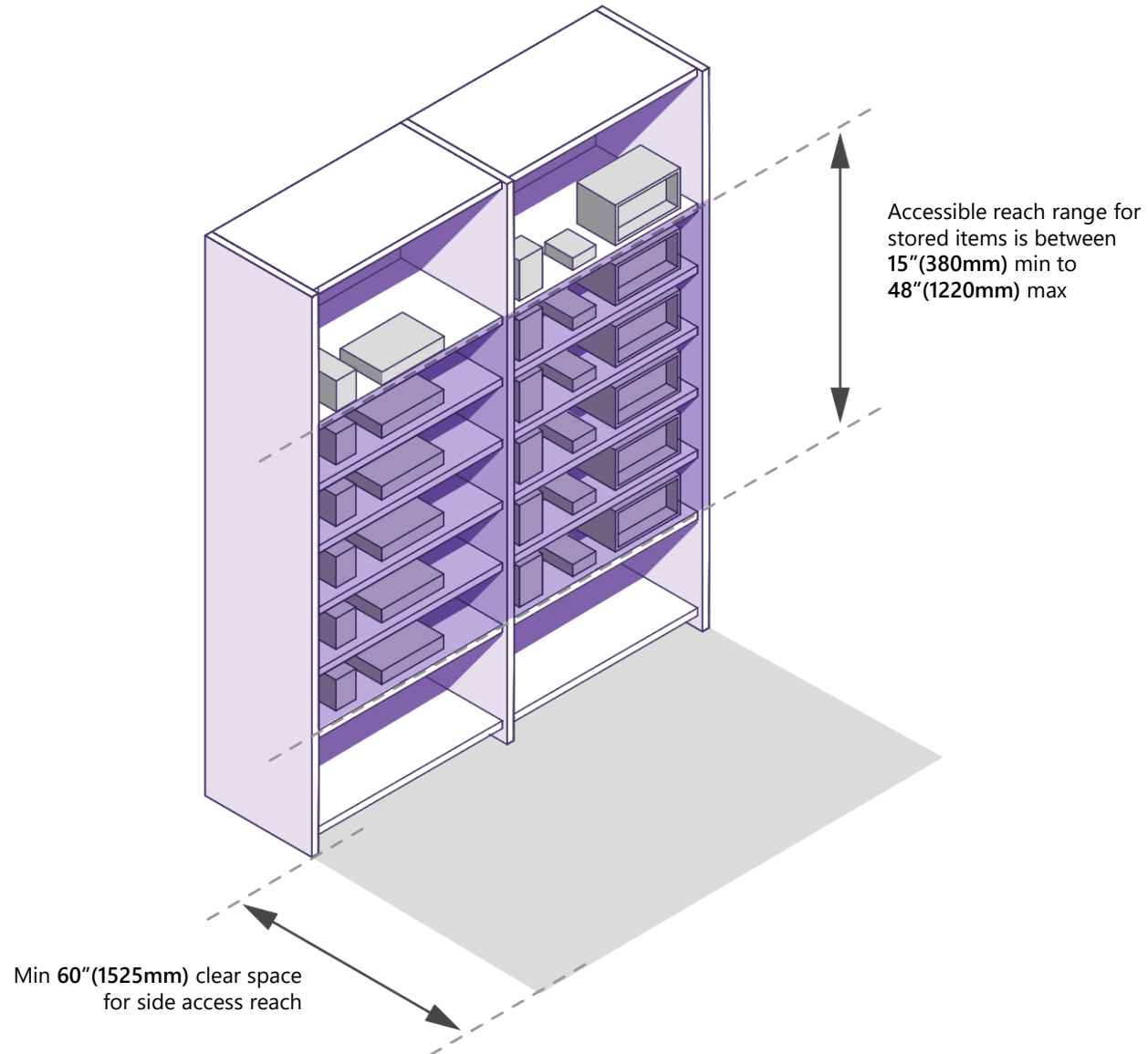
High-backed chairs may be used as a flexible way to create enclosed retreat spaces that support sensory comfort and neuro-inclusive use.



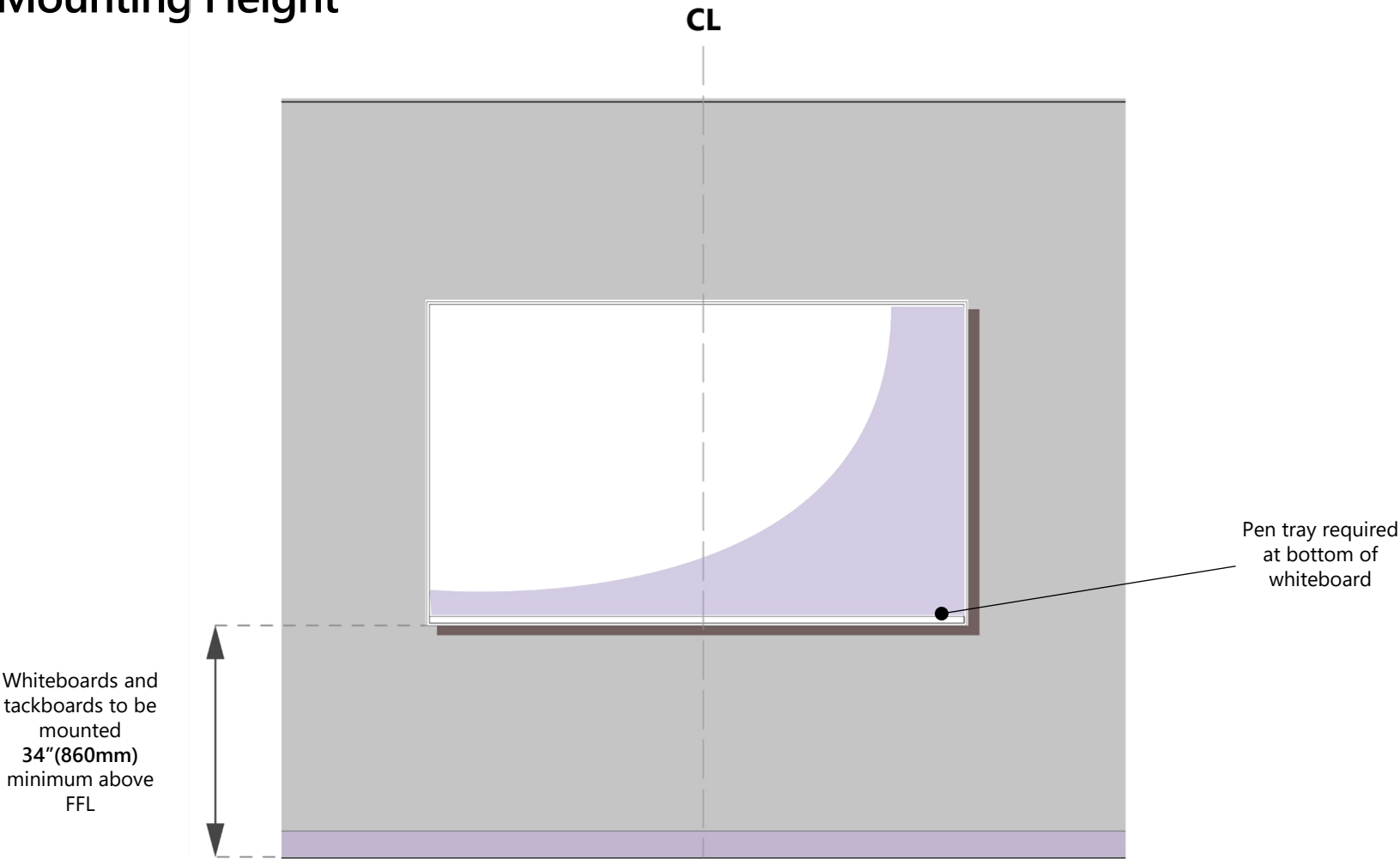
OPTION 2

D4 Storage and Shelving

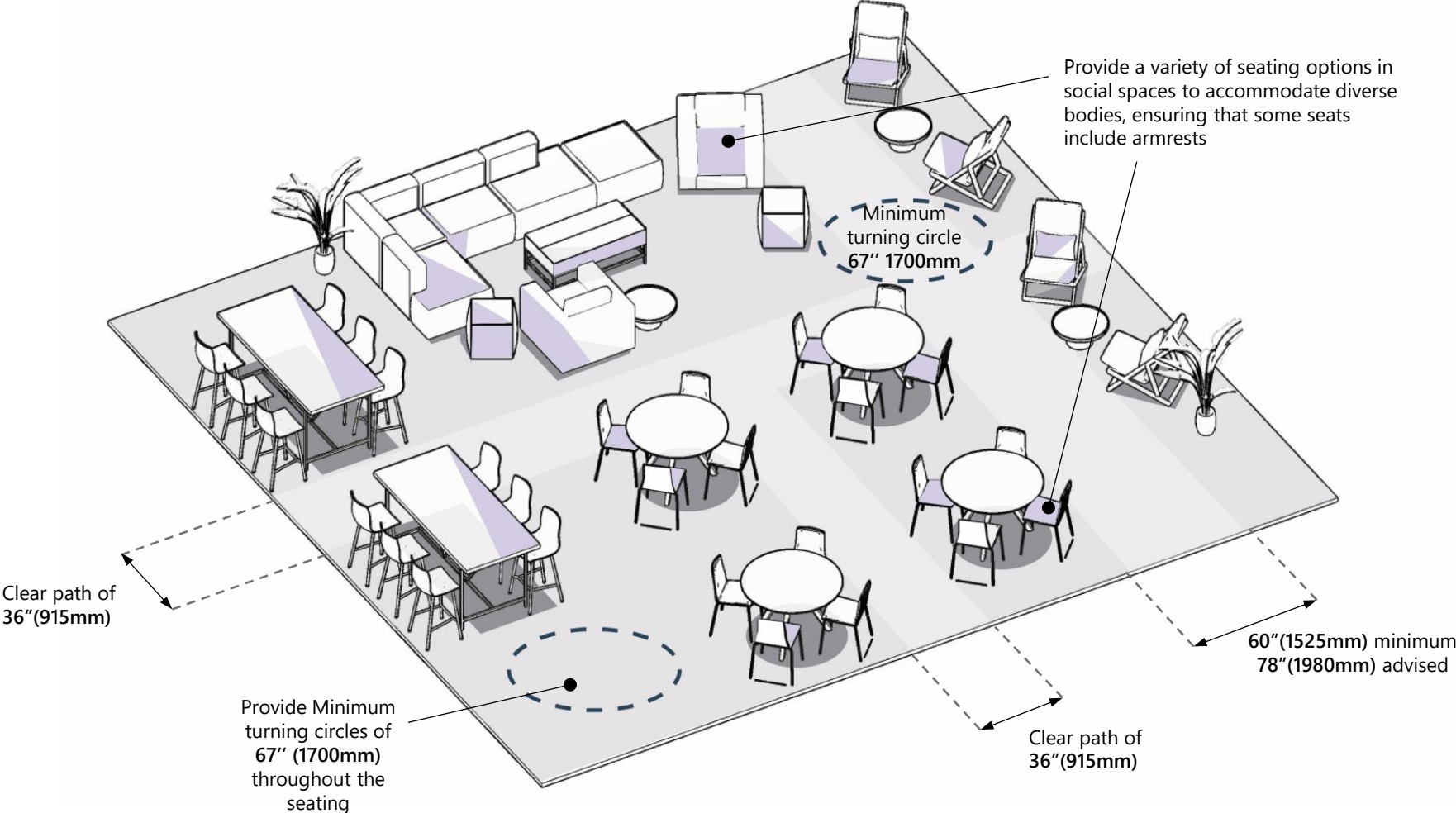
Apply vertical shelf stocking to provide the same items at both a lower and higher shelf, so that vertical space can be used without putting items out of reach for people of short stature or in wheelchairs



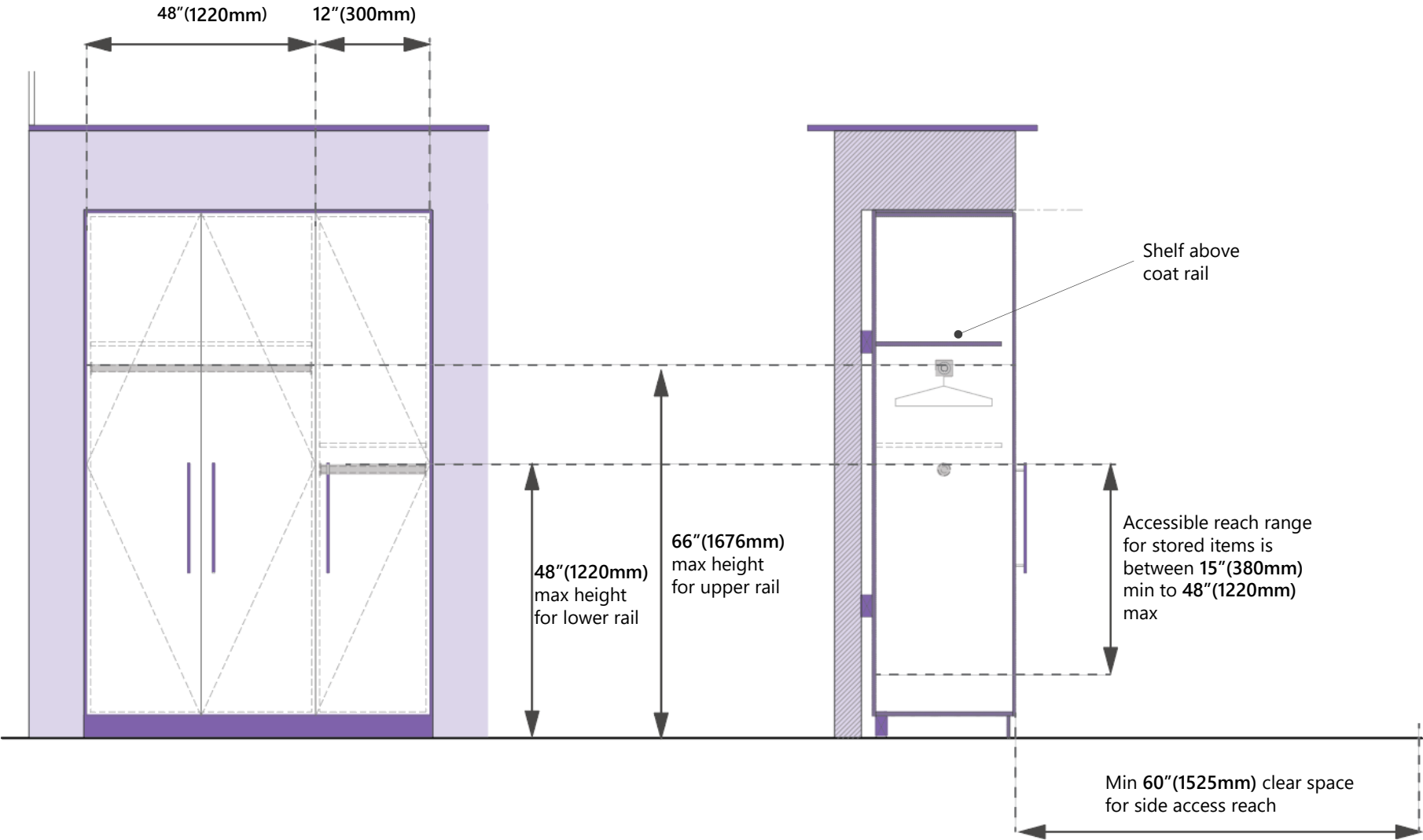
D5 Whiteboard Mounting Height



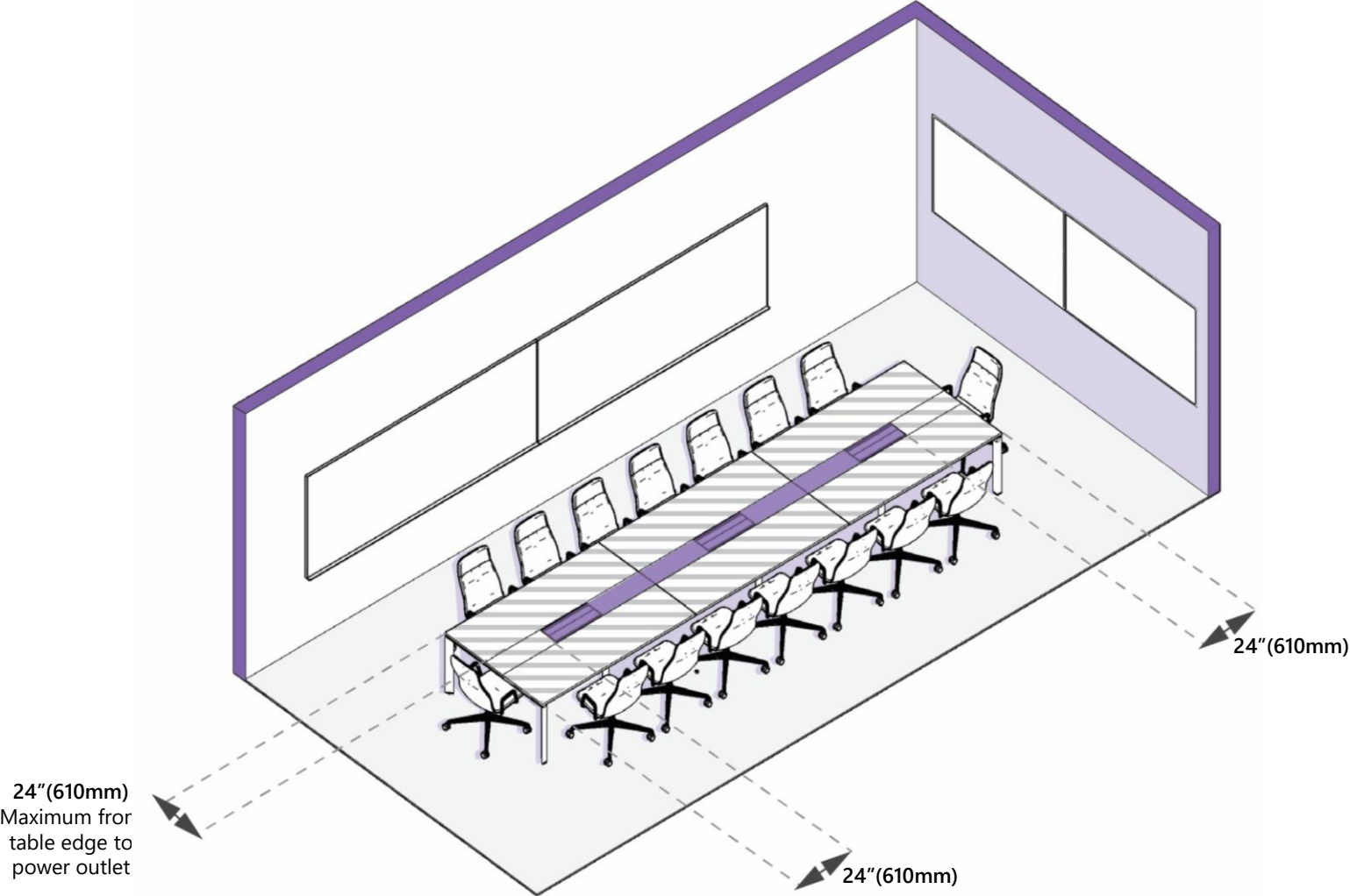
D6 Loose Furniture Settings



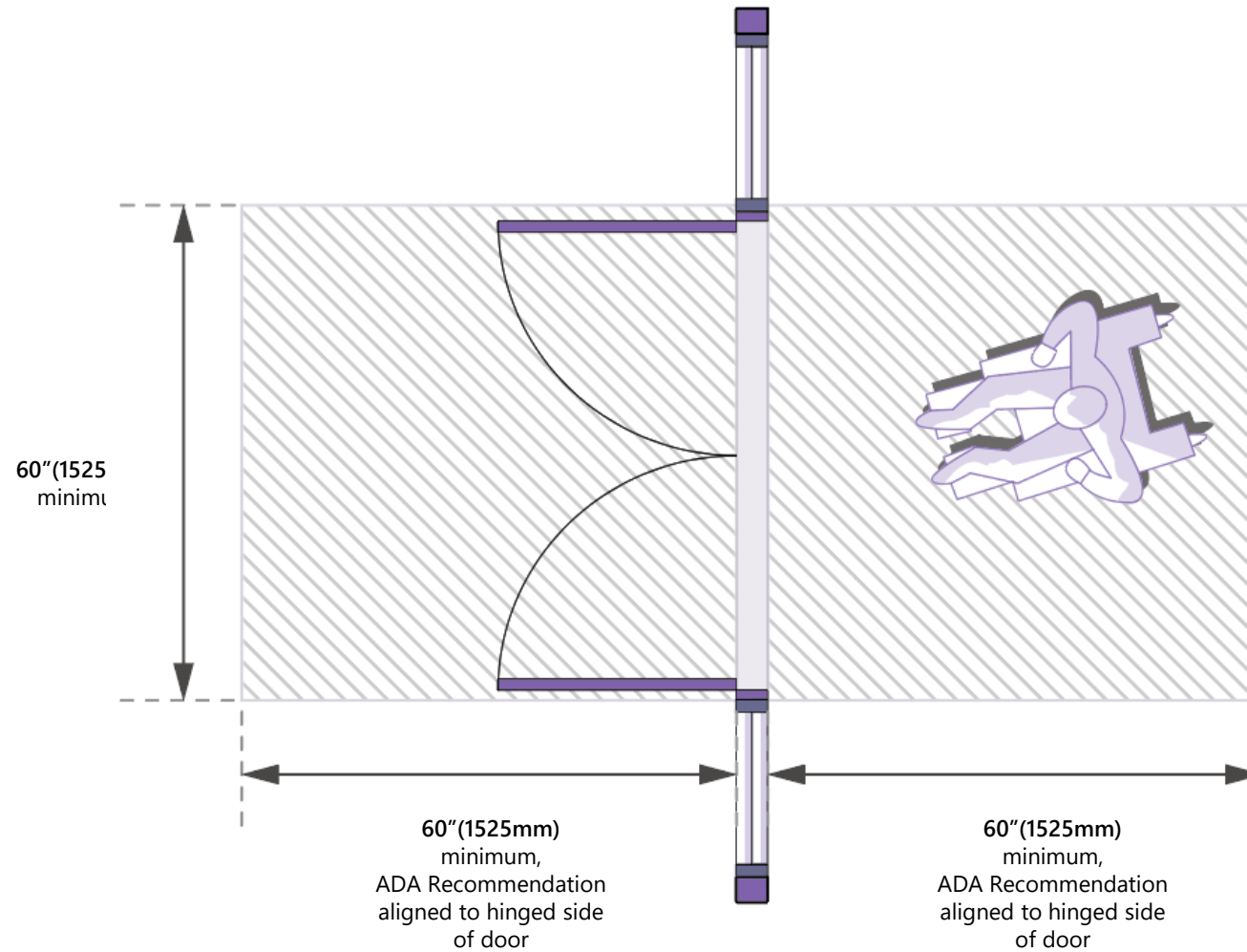
D7 Accessible Coat Closet



D8 Tabletop Power

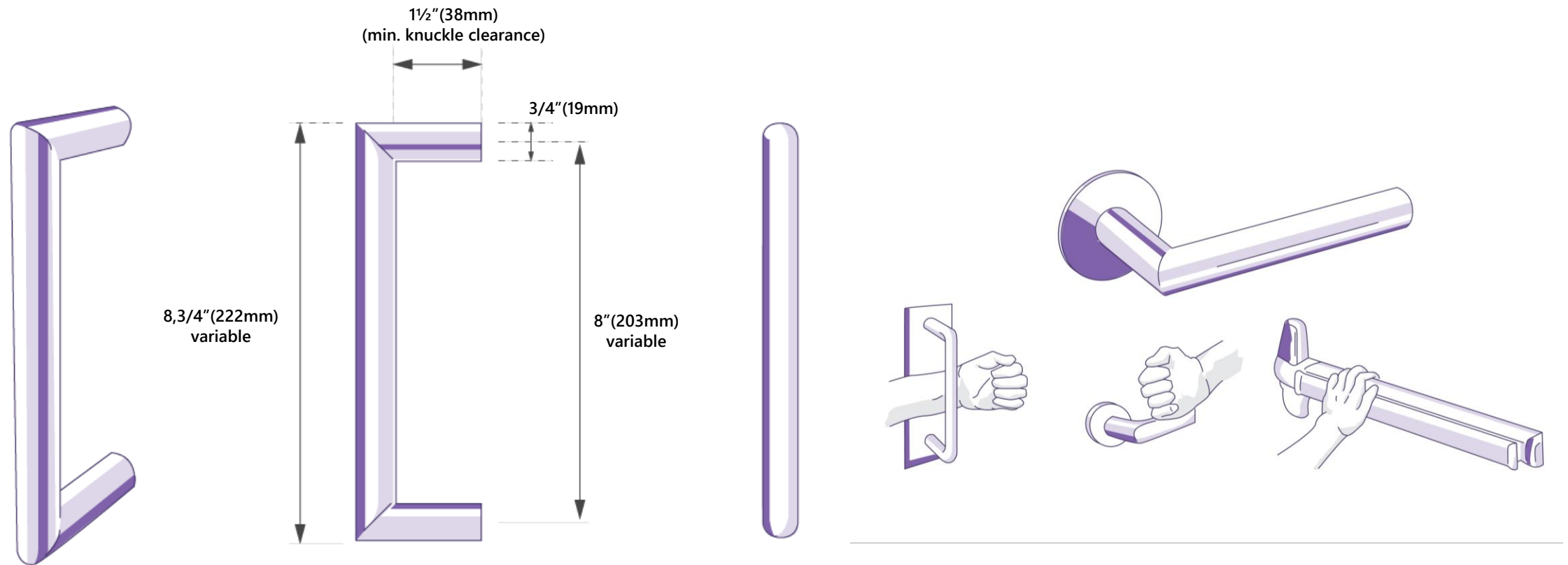


D9 Accessible Level Landing



For further guidance refer to ADA 404.2.4
<https://www.access-board.gov/ada/guides/chapter-4-entrances-doors-and-gates/#maneuvering-clearances>

D10 Door Handles

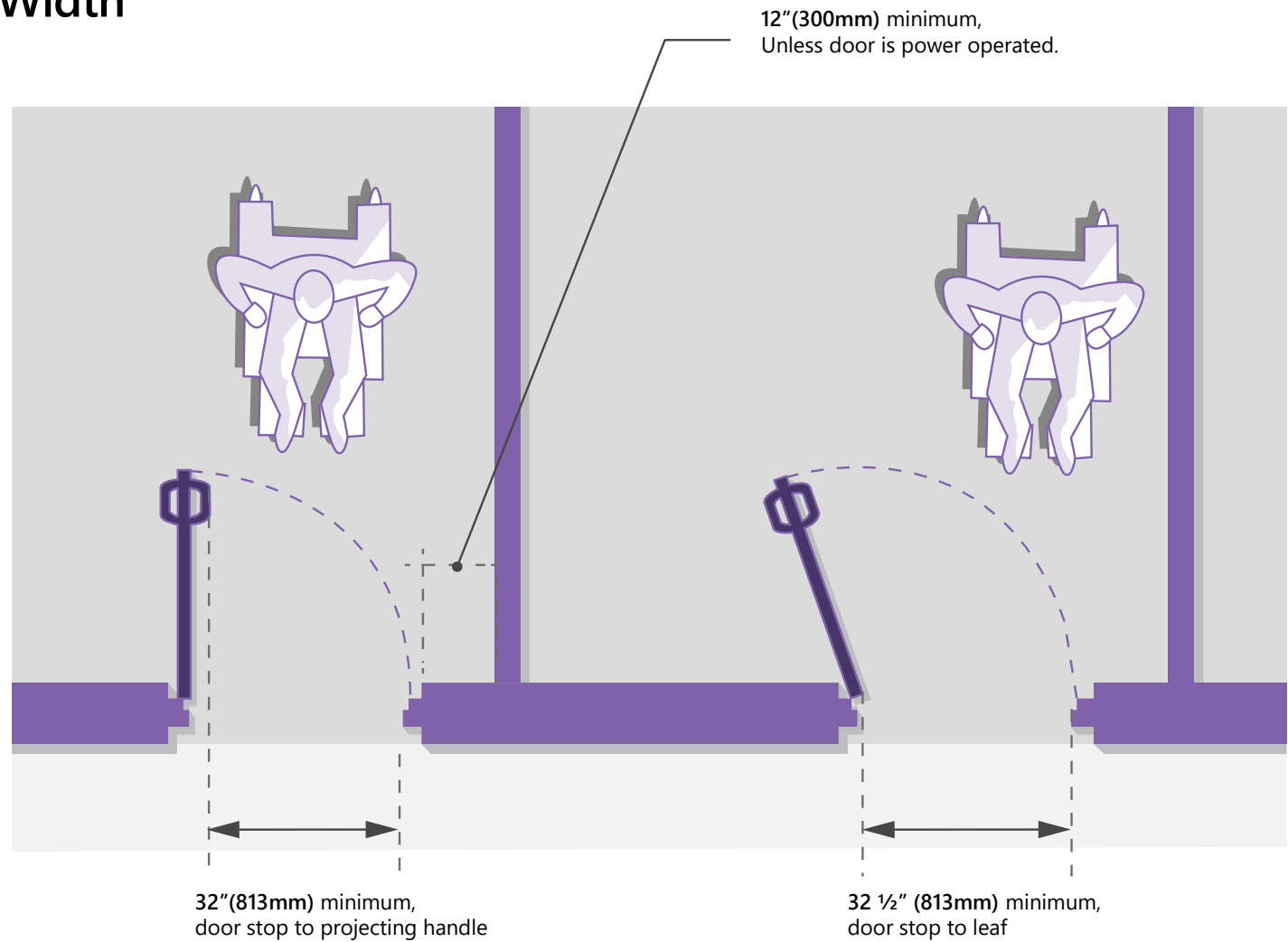


Specify hardware that is usable with a closed fist or loose grip.

Bars, pulls, and similar hardware should provide minimum knuckle clearance (1½ inches minimum) to facilitate gripping.

Avoid hardware that requires hand or finger dexterity, fine motor movement, or simultaneous actions.

D11 Clear Opening Width



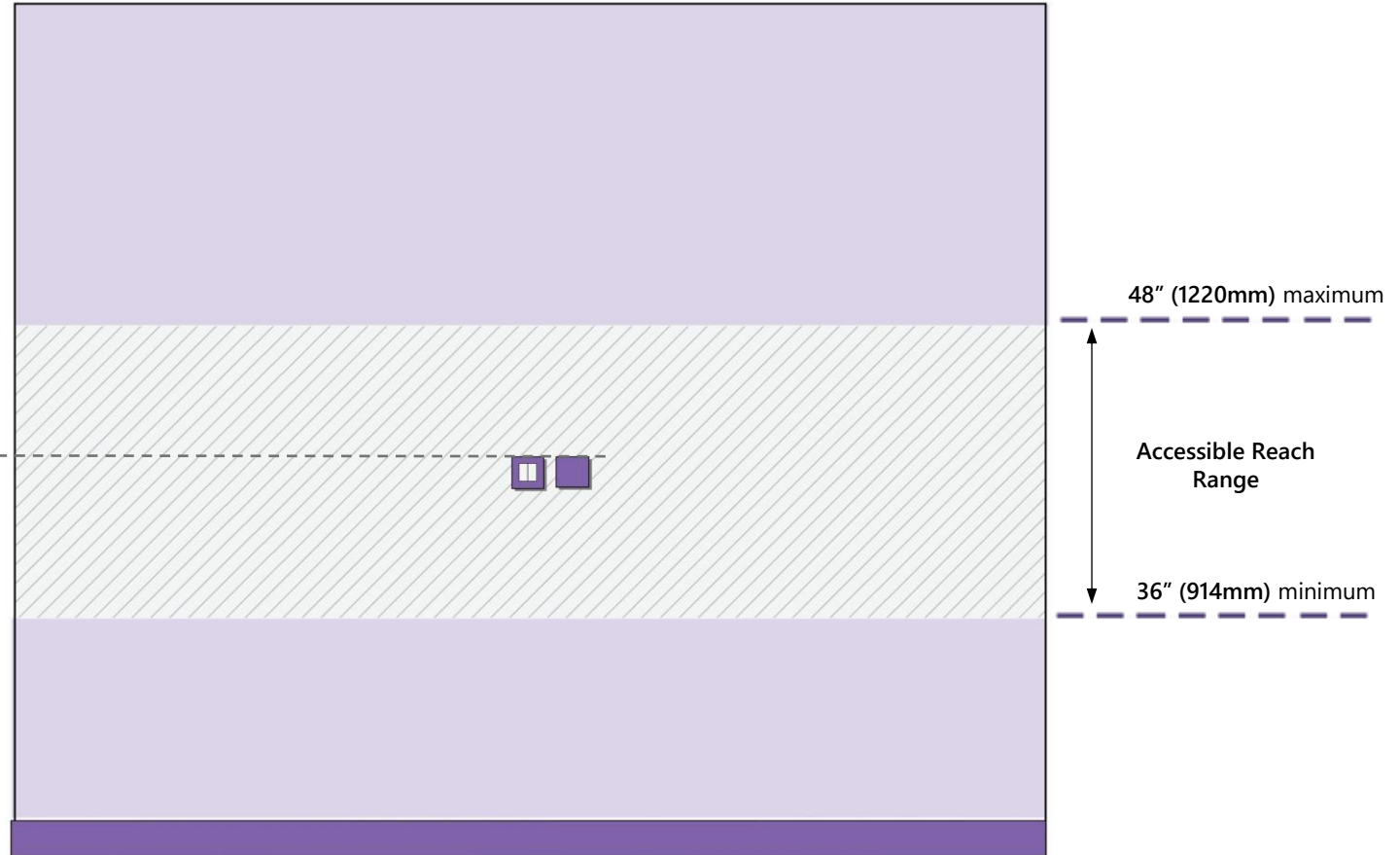
Local code must be followed where requirement is more stringent

D12 Device Mounting Heights

Devices to be mounted within the Accessible Reach Range:

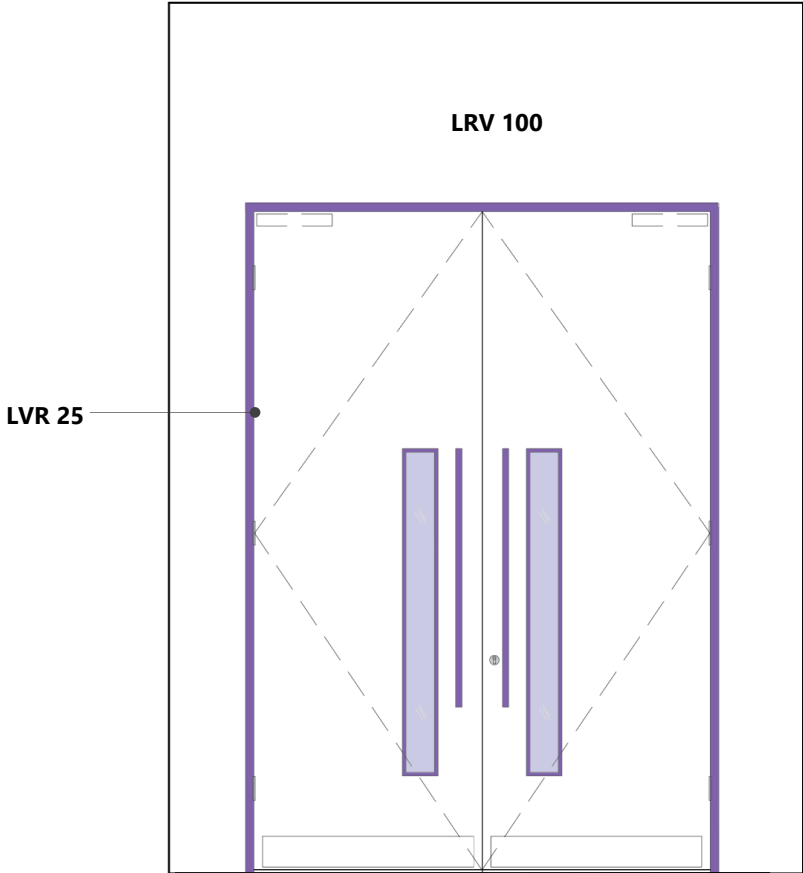
- Card Readers
- Auto Door Openers
- Booking Panels (incl. Conference Hall Displays – CHDs)
- Lighting Controls
- A/C Controls
- Heating Controls
- Fire Alarms
- Hand dryers + Paper towel dispensers
(however, underside no higher than 39.4"/ 1m)

When placing multiple devices side by side, ensure they are top aligned and have consistent horizontal spacing

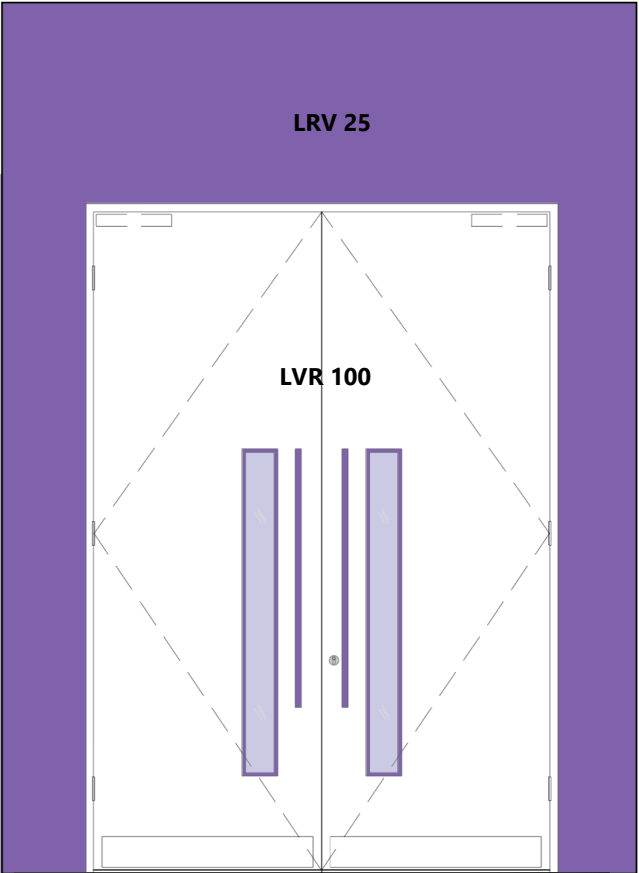


D13 Visual Contrast around Door Openings

Visual contrast around door openings. Minimum **30 LRV** difference.

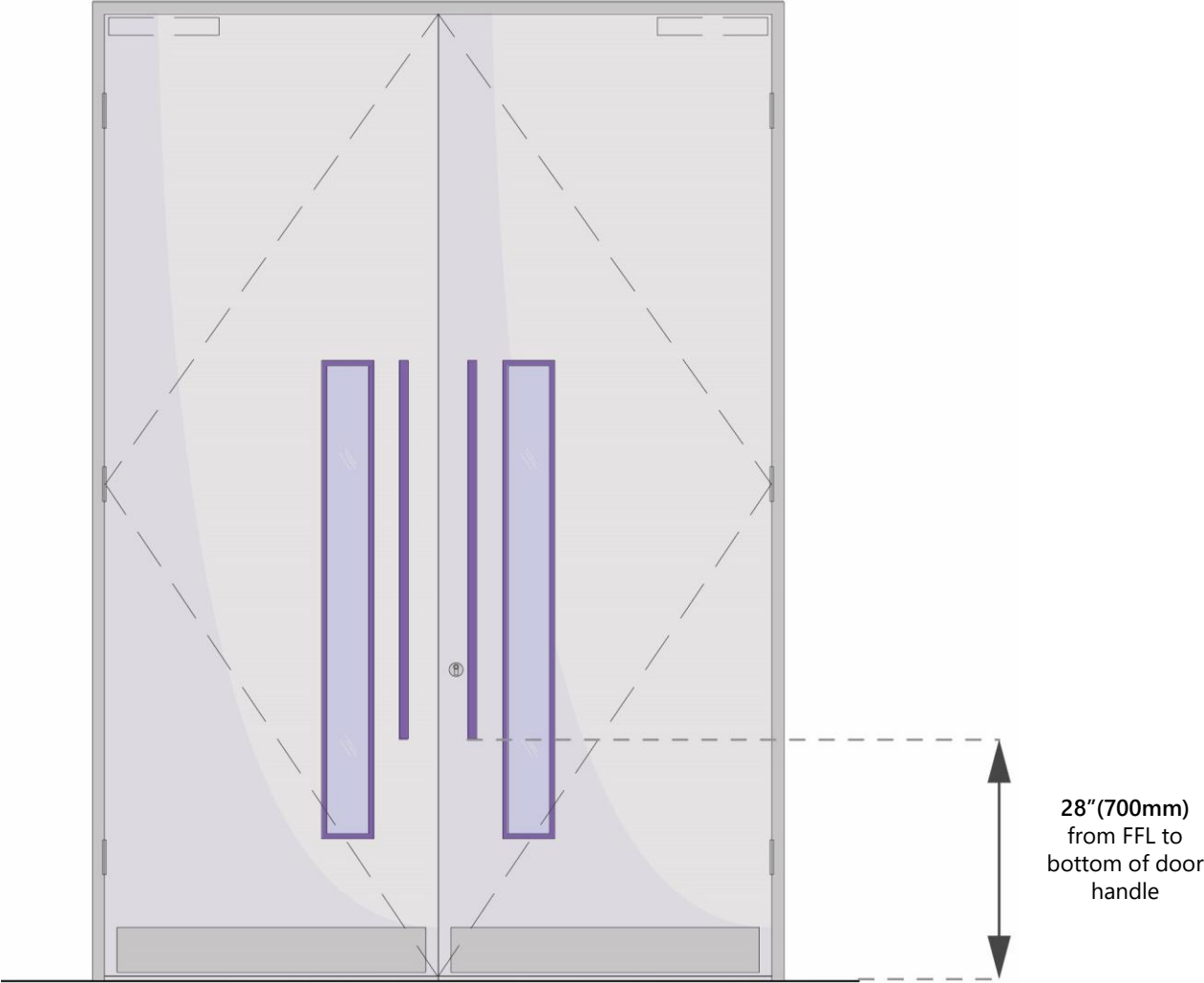


Wall and door color the same. Architrave contrasts with a minimum 30LRV difference.

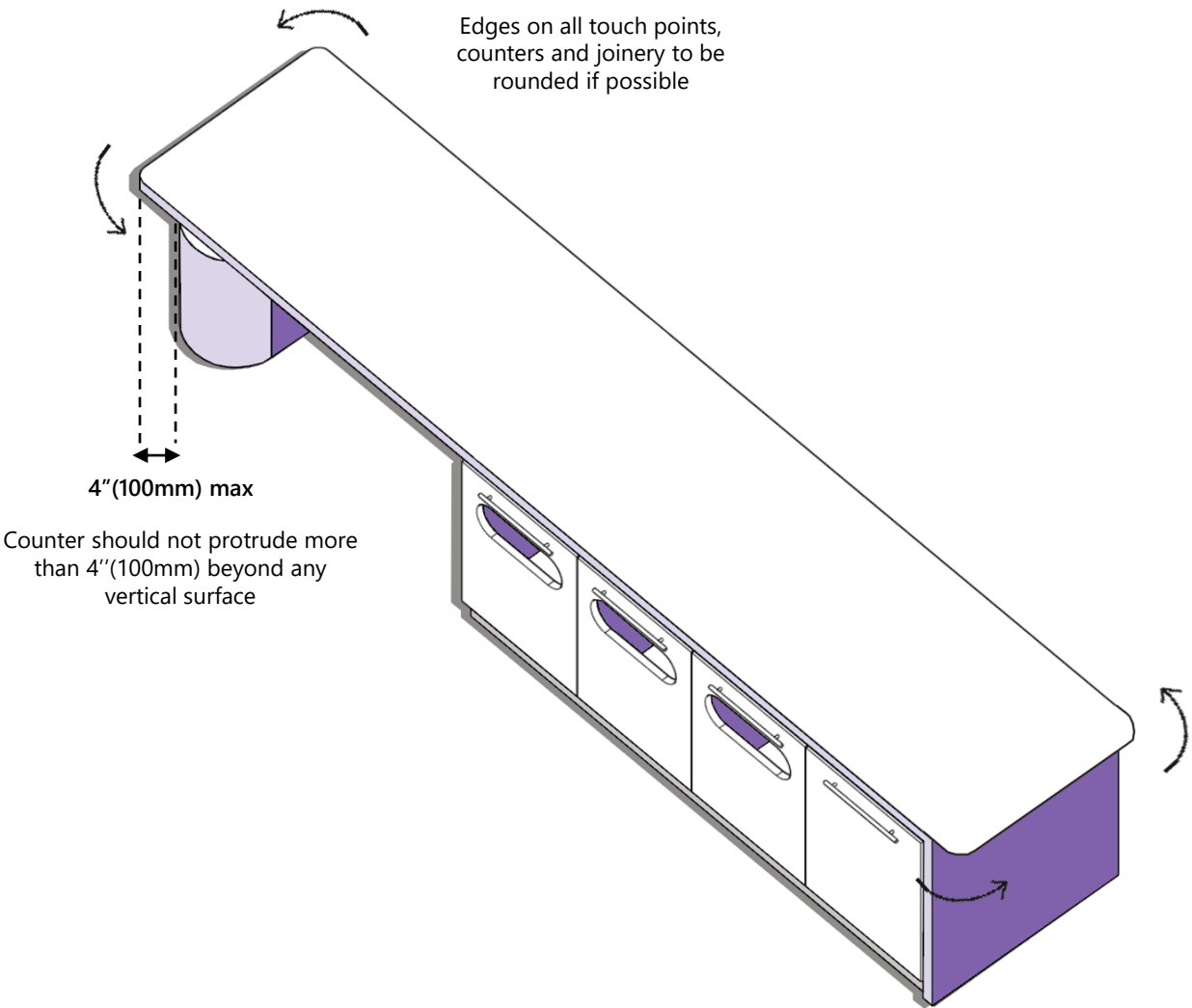


Wall and door color contrast with minimum 30LRV difference.

D14 Full Height Handle

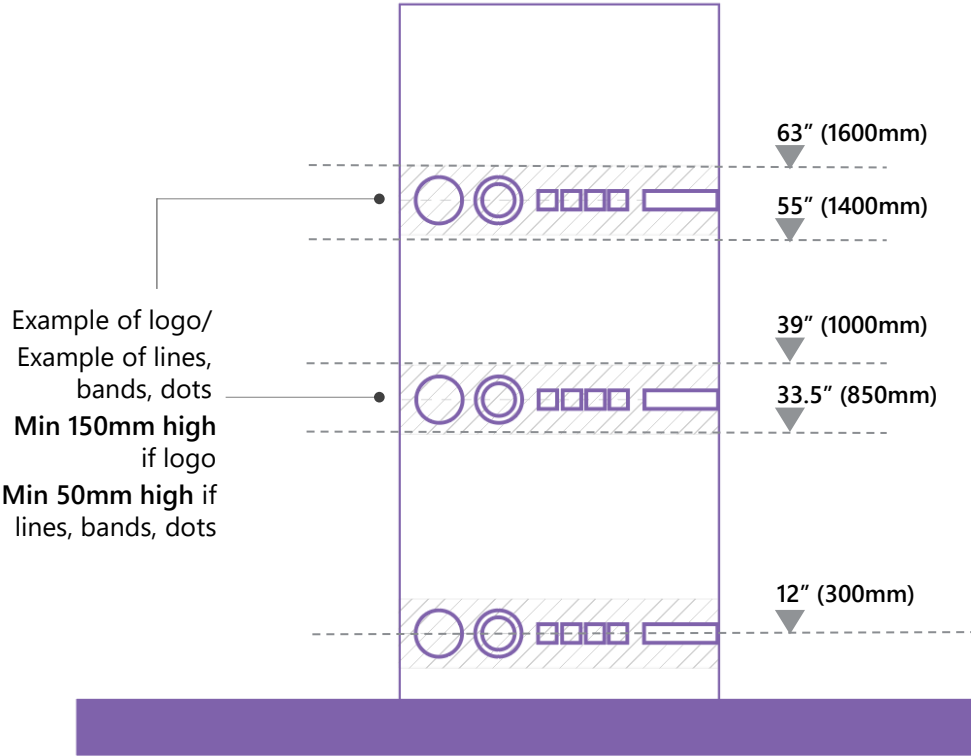


D15 No Sharp Edges or Protrusions



D16 Glass Manifestation Height

SAFETY MANIFESTATION



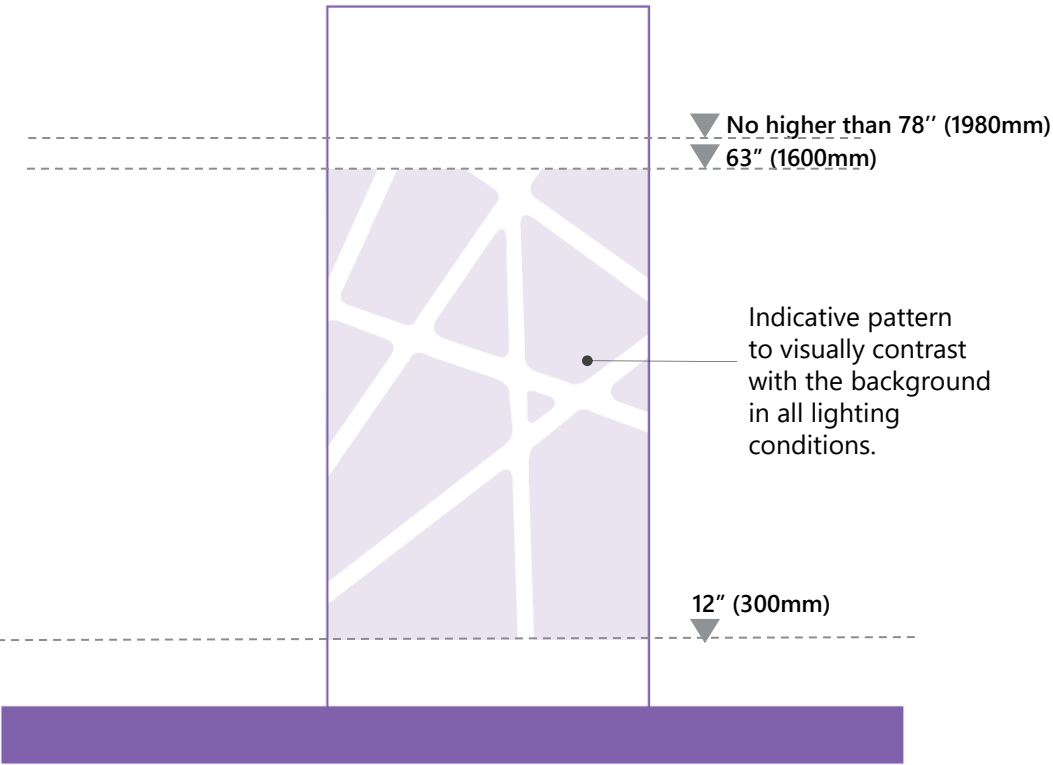
Requirement for safety - where privacy is not the primary requirement.

 *Design intent: Providing a lower band at 300mm high will assist those who navigate by primarily looking downwards.*

*Safety manifestation can be in various forms or motif. Company logos or signs need to be a **minimum of 150mm high** (repeated if on a glazed screen), or a decorative feature such as broken lines, dots or continuous bands of **minimum of 50mm high**.*

Ensure manifestation contrasts visually with the background seen through the glass, both from inside and outside, in all lighting conditions.

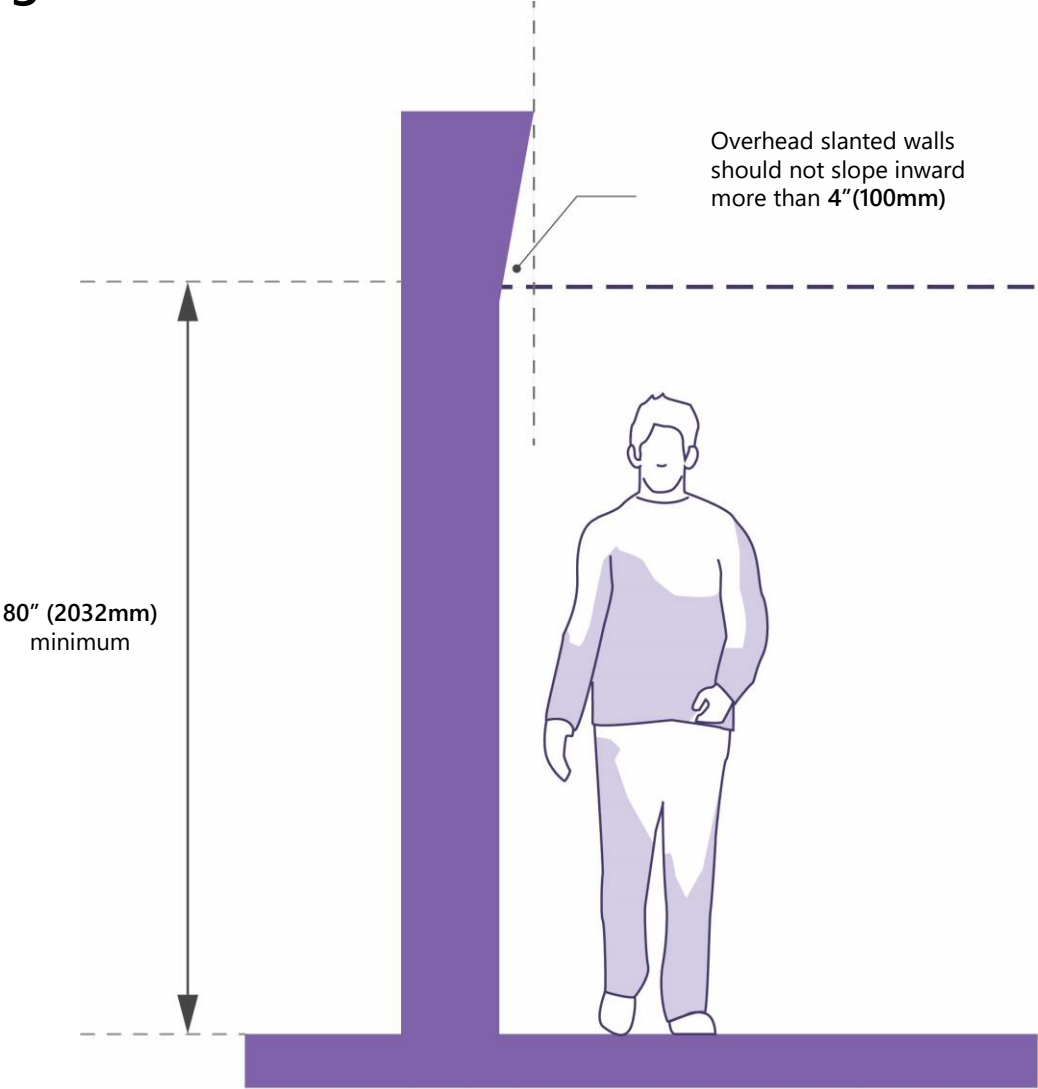
PRIVACY MANIFESTATION



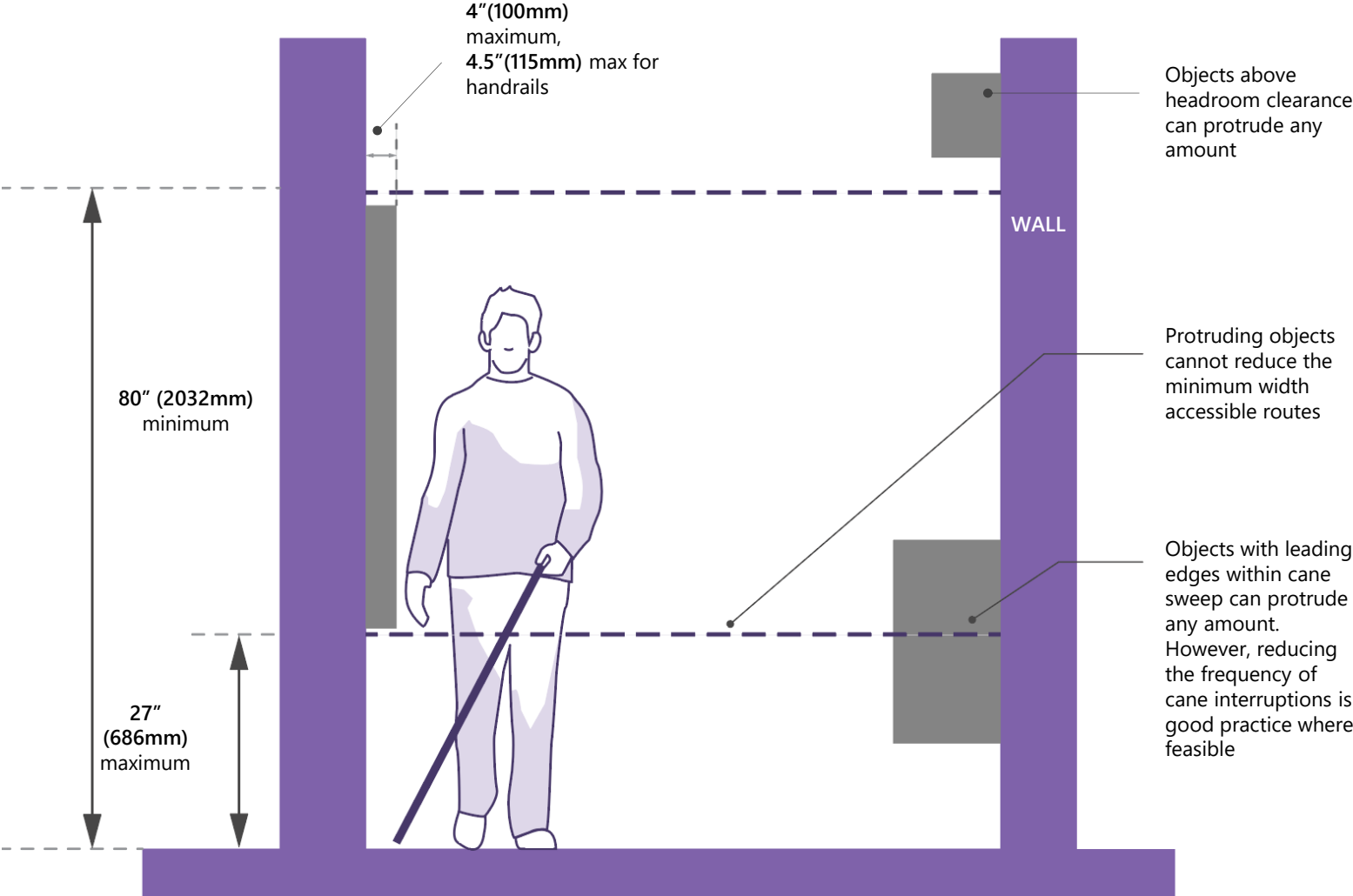
Requirement for privacy and meeting safety requirements.

NOTE: WHERE LOCAL LEGISLATION EXCEEDS THESE REQUIREMENTS; IMPLEMENT THE LOCAL LEGISLATION

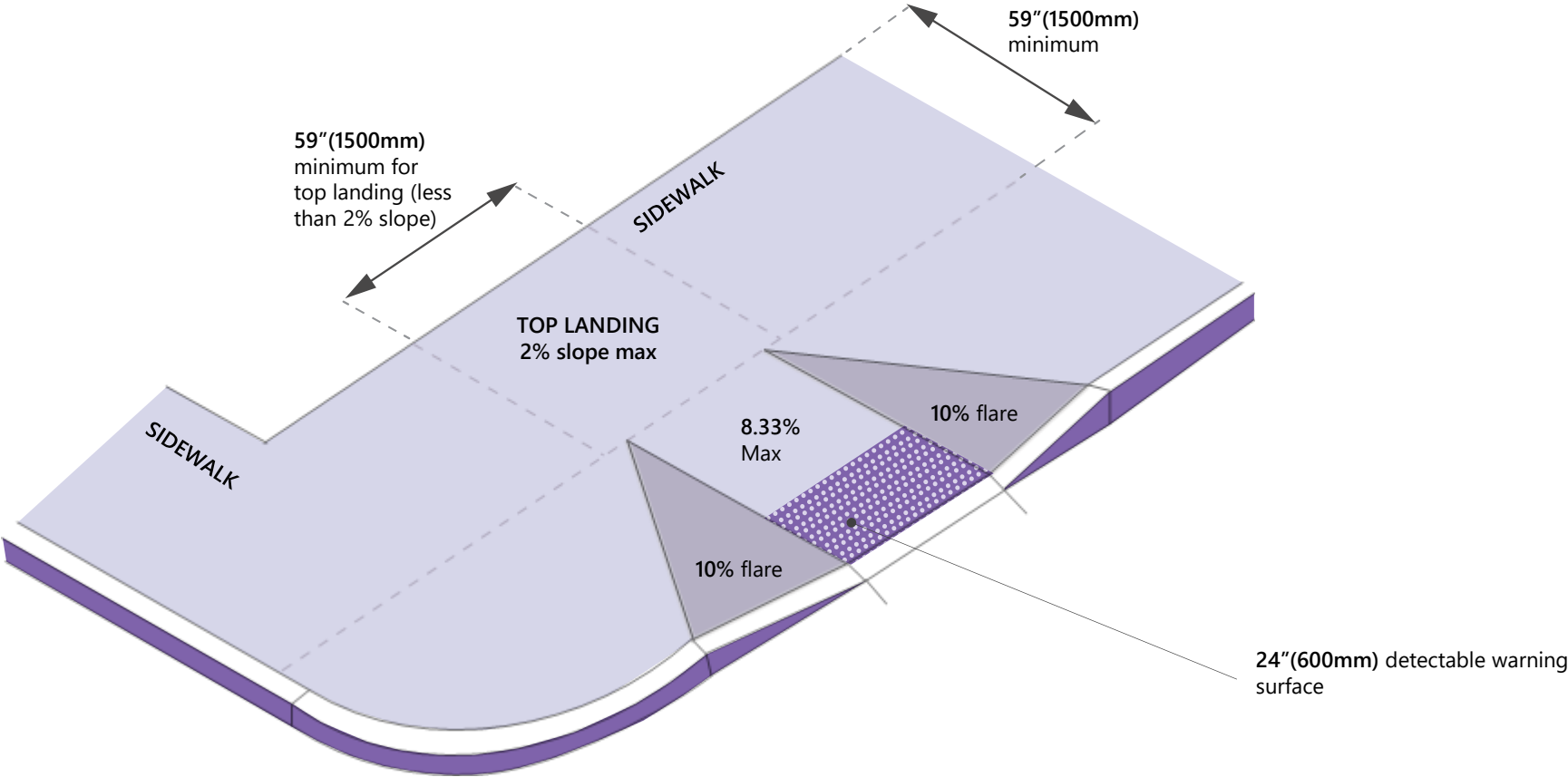
D17 Overhead Slanting Walls



D18 Protruding Objects



D19 Lowered Curb

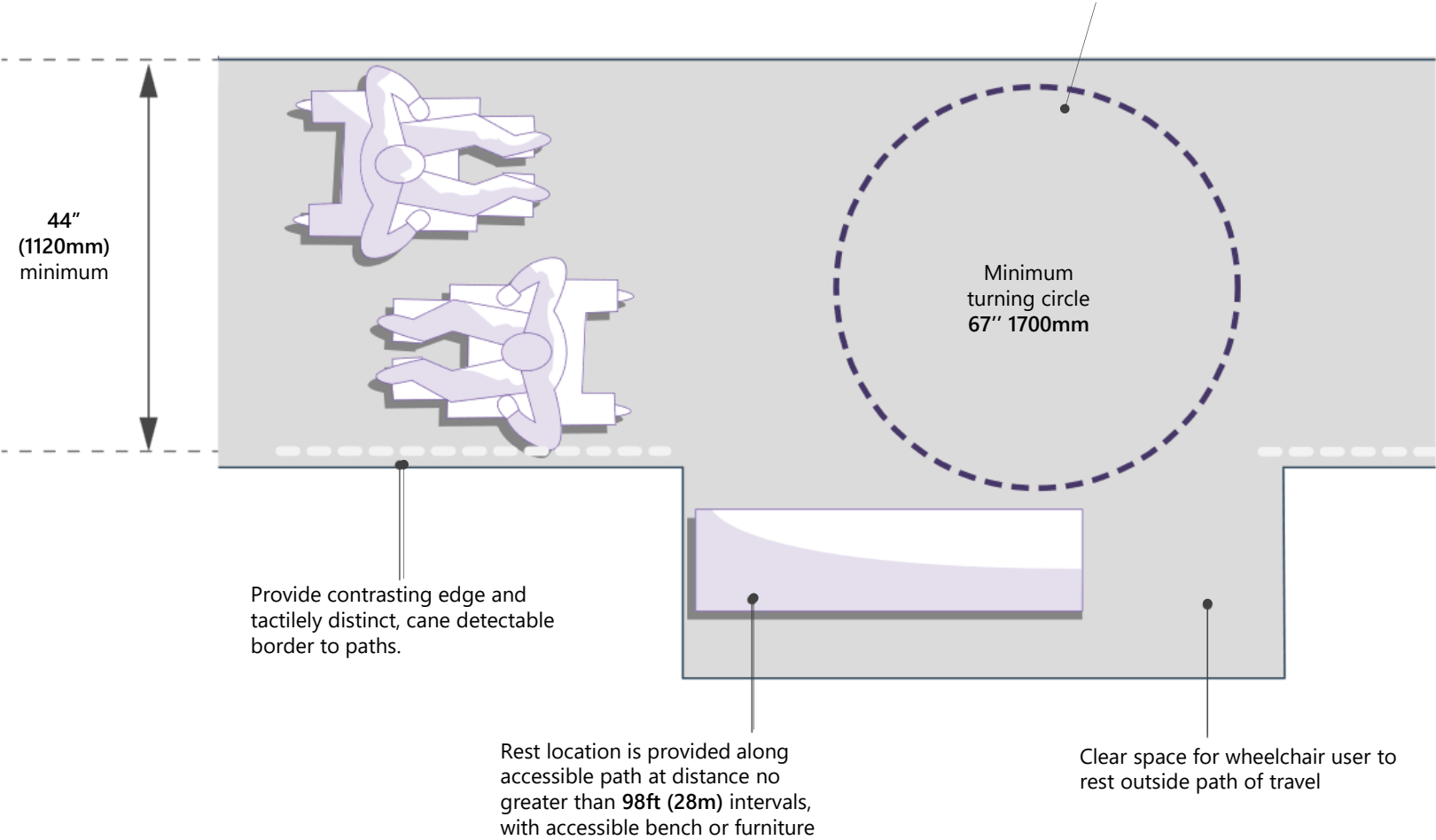


For further guidance refer to *ADA 406*
Chapter 4: Ramps and Curb Ramps

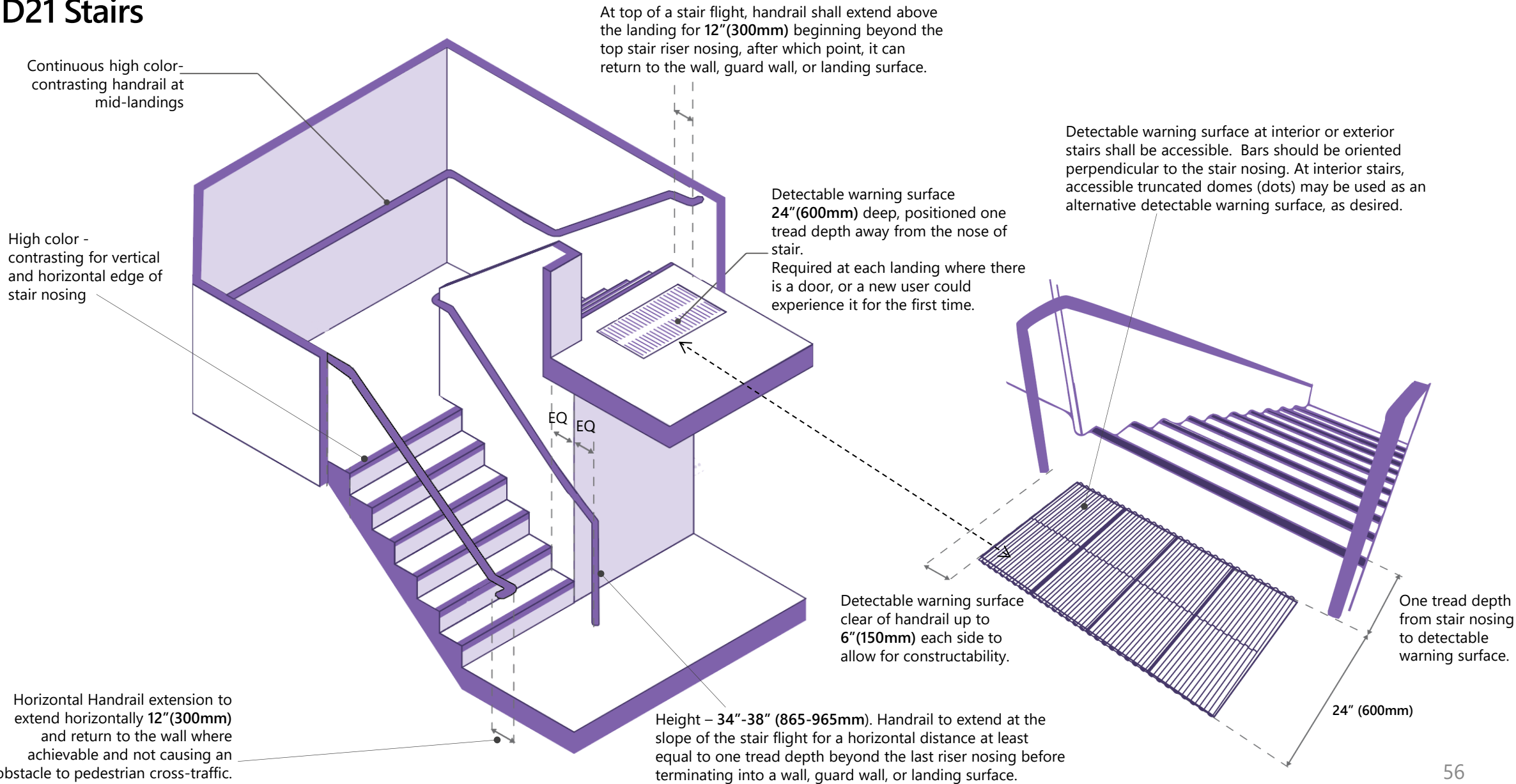
D20 Main Exterior Circulation Route

Where change of direction may be required along path of travel
67”(1700mm) minimum turning radius is provided to
accommodate people with power chairs.

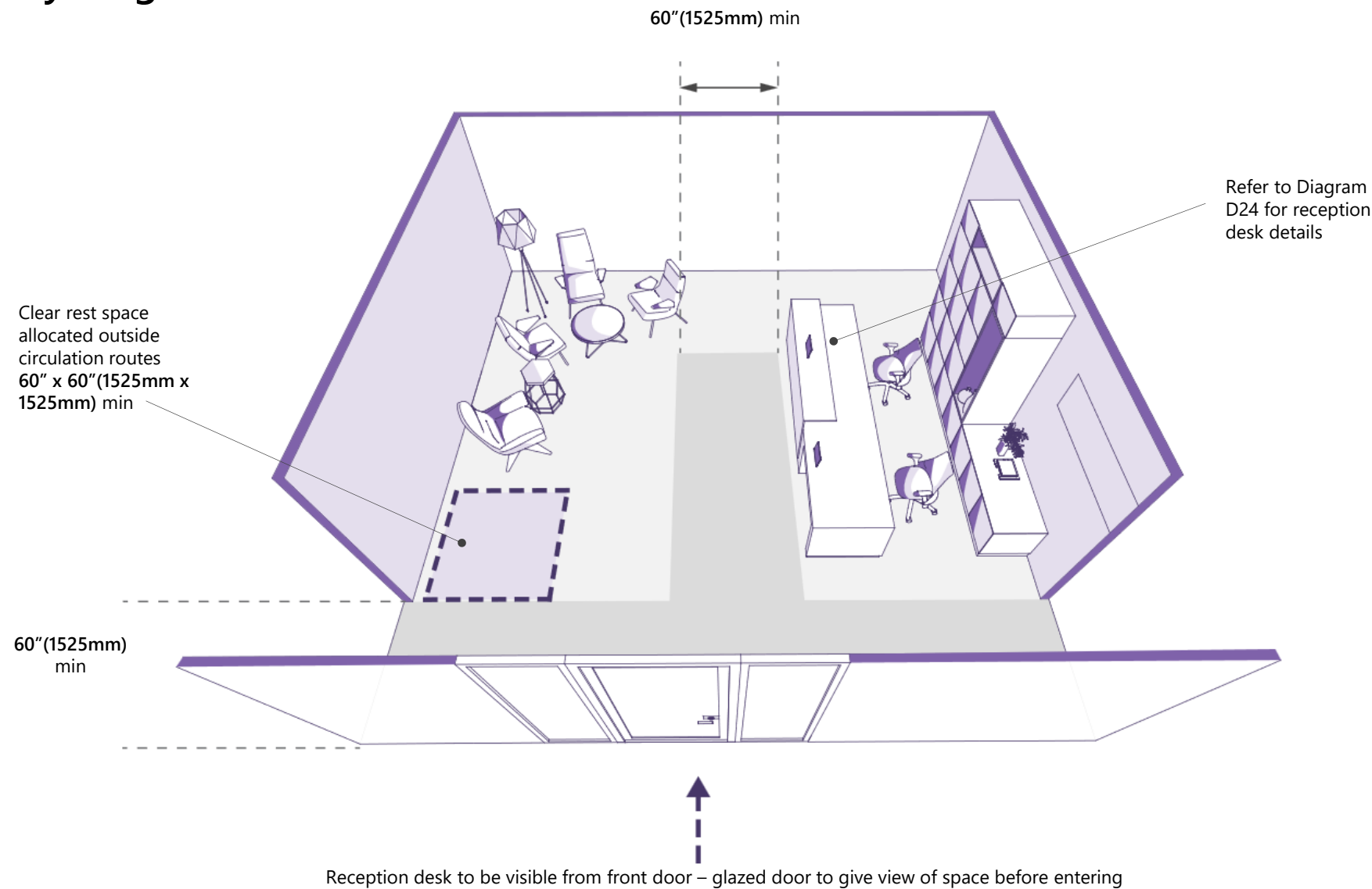
83”(2110mm) turning radius as best practice where space allows



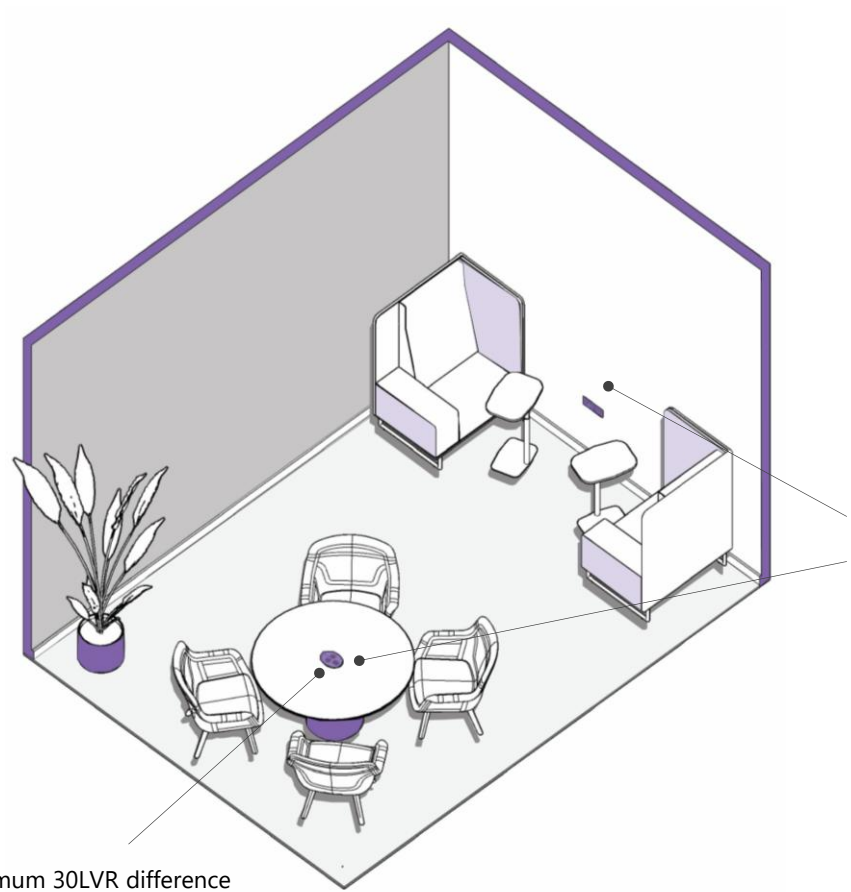
D21 Stairs



D22 Lobby Diagram

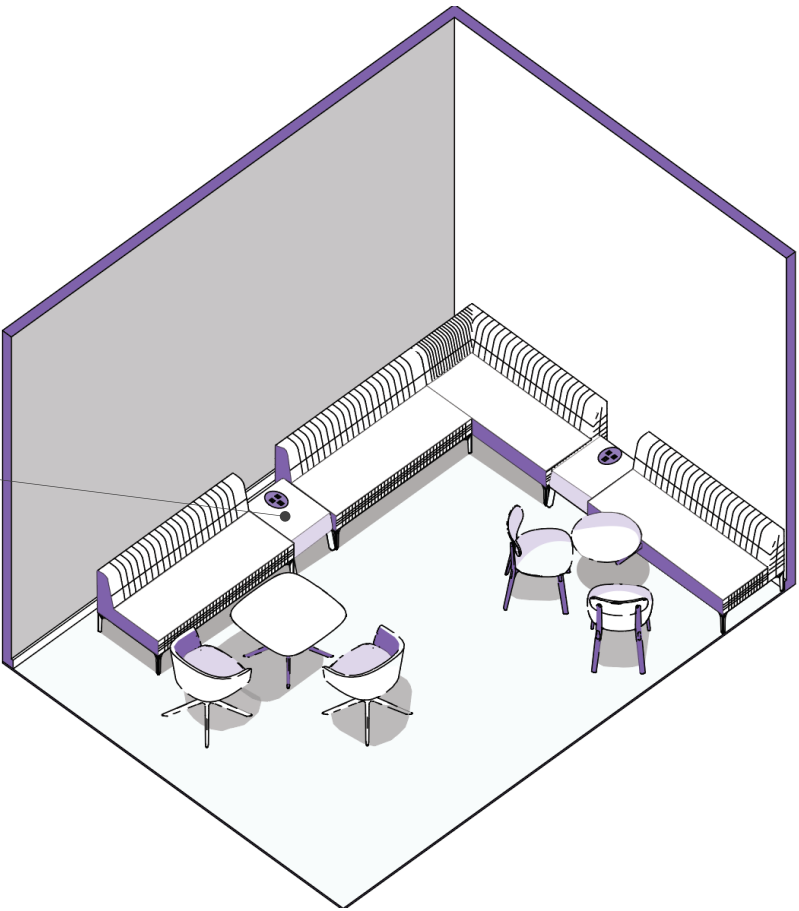


D23 Accessible Power

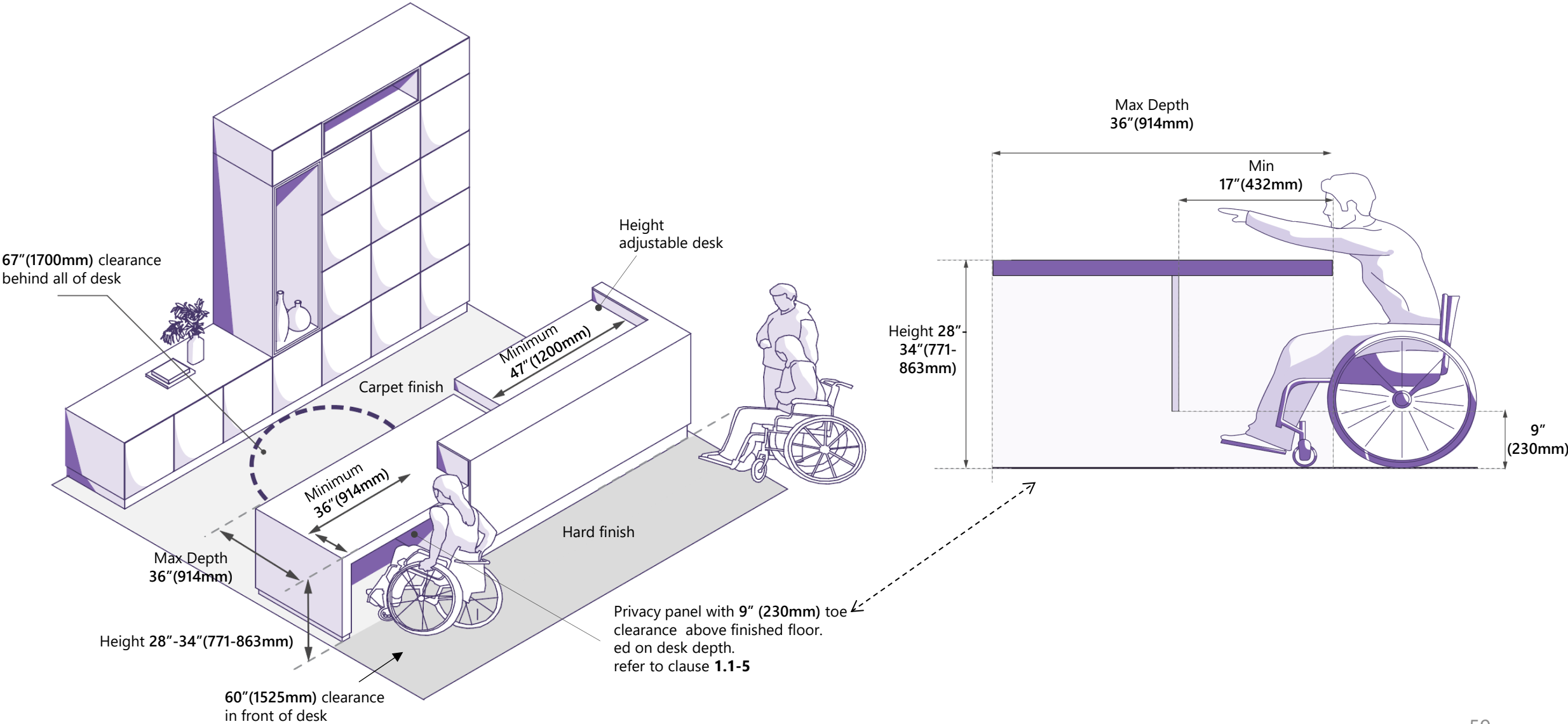


Minimum 30LVR difference between power module and table finish

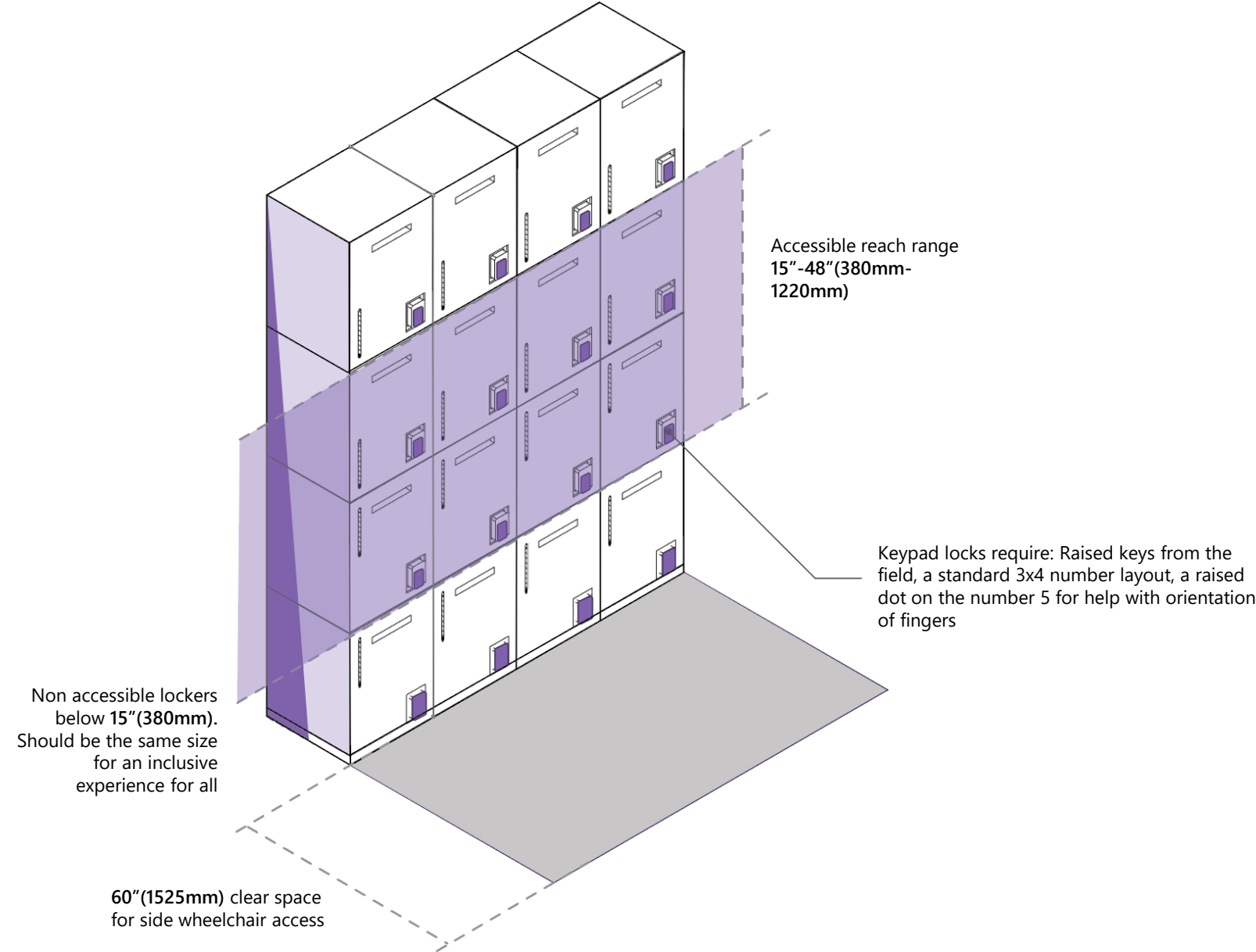
Power required in lobby spaces. Available either as wall power or desktop power. Ensure visual contrast min 30 LVR with adjacent surface



D24 Reception Desk

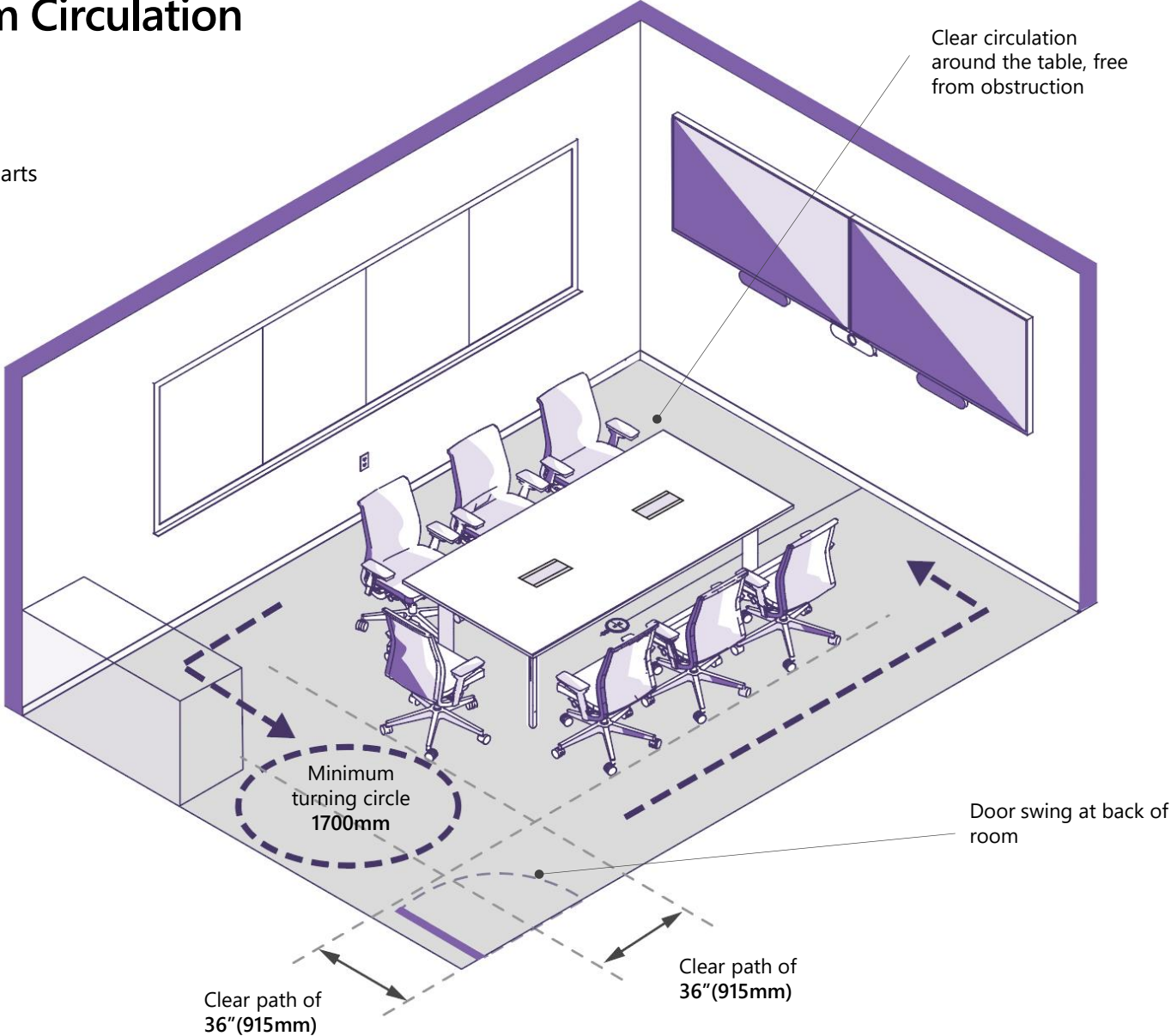


D25 Lockers

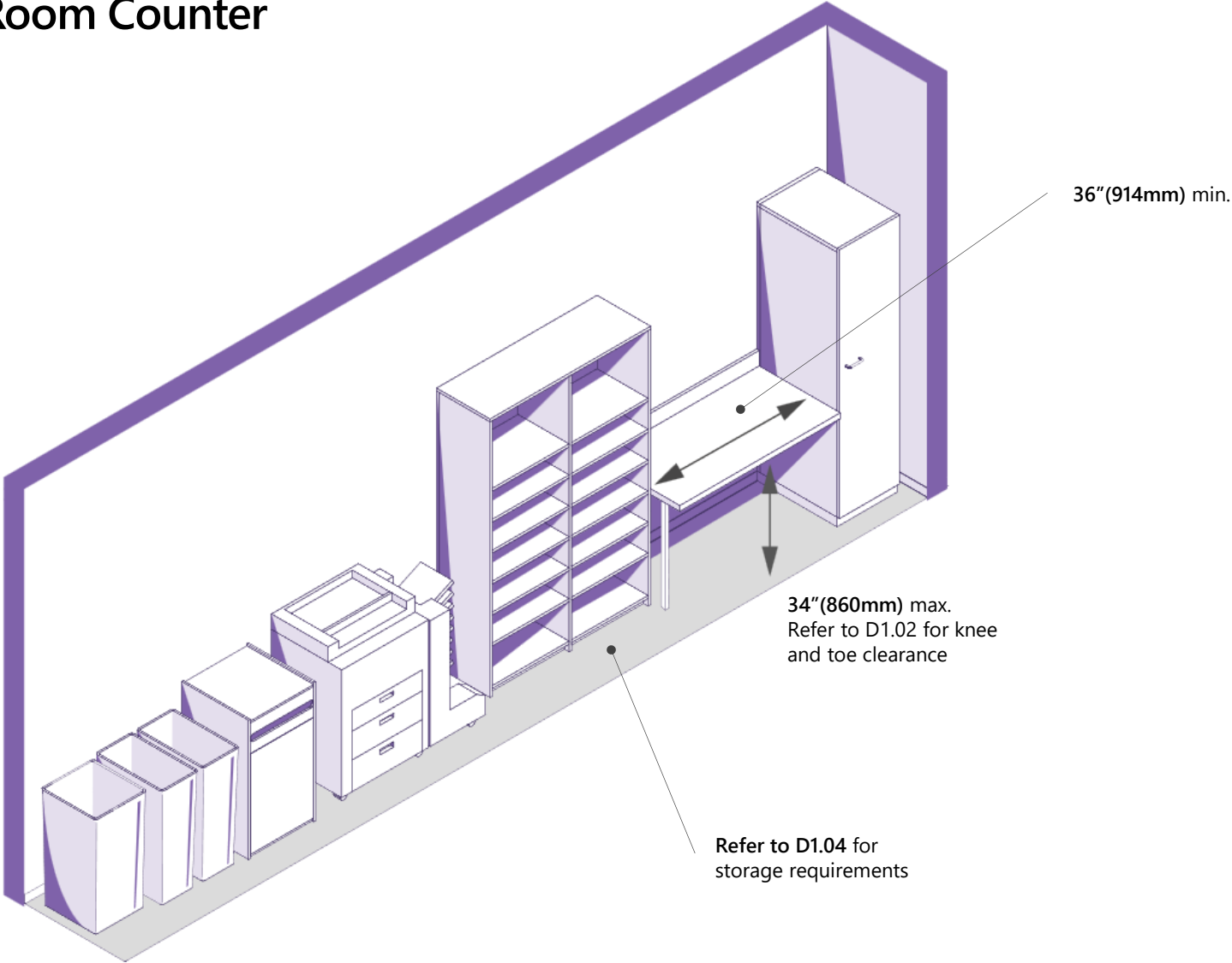


D26 Conference Room Circulation

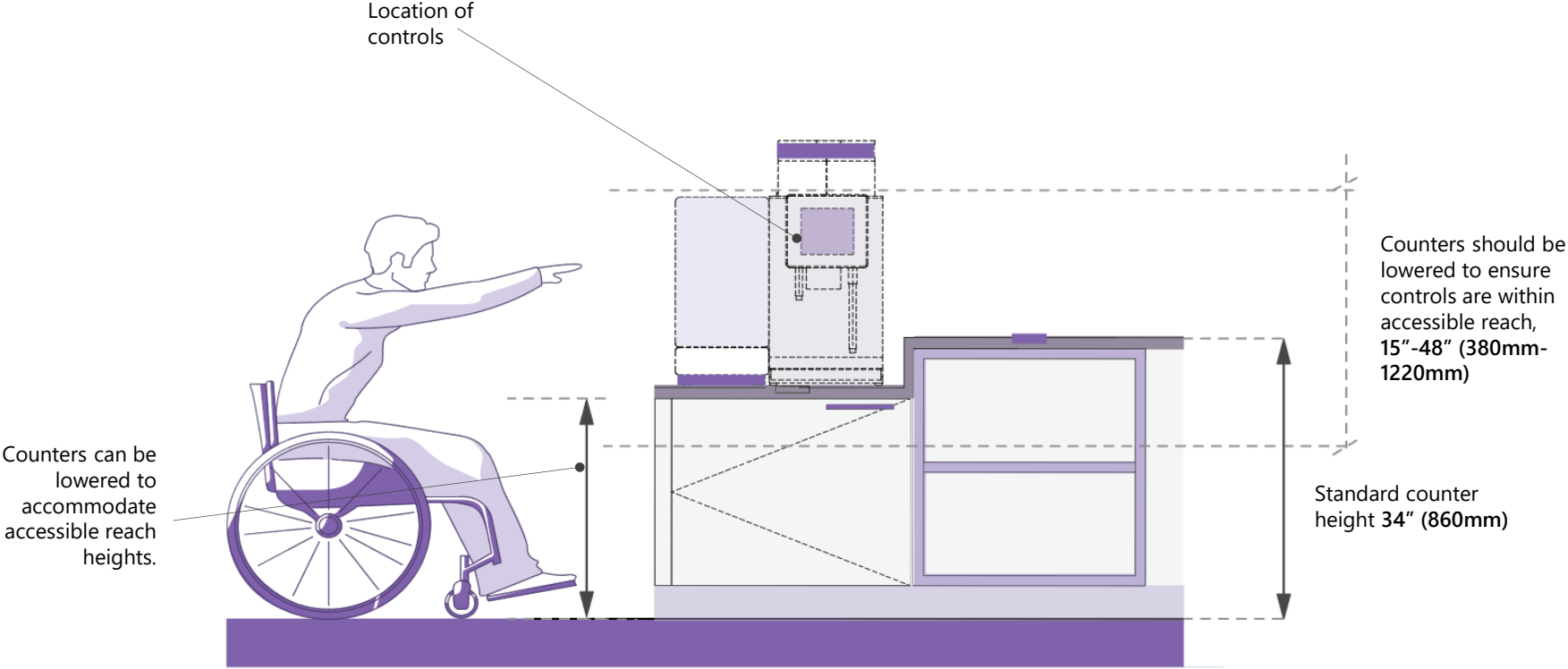
Refer to individual space type area requirements.
Minimum areas are in place to ensure all parts of the room and equipment are accessible



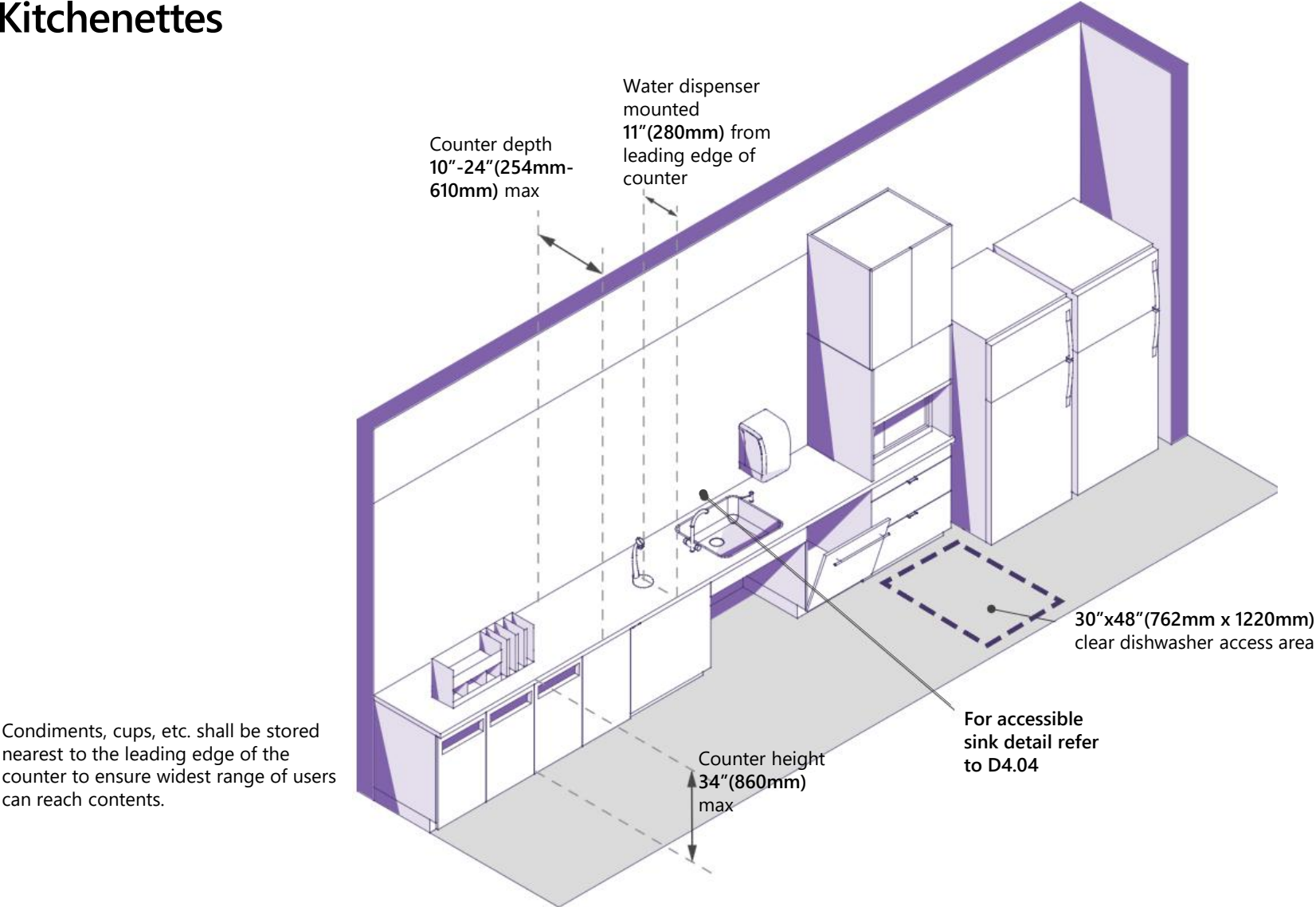
D27 Mail Room /Supply Room Counter



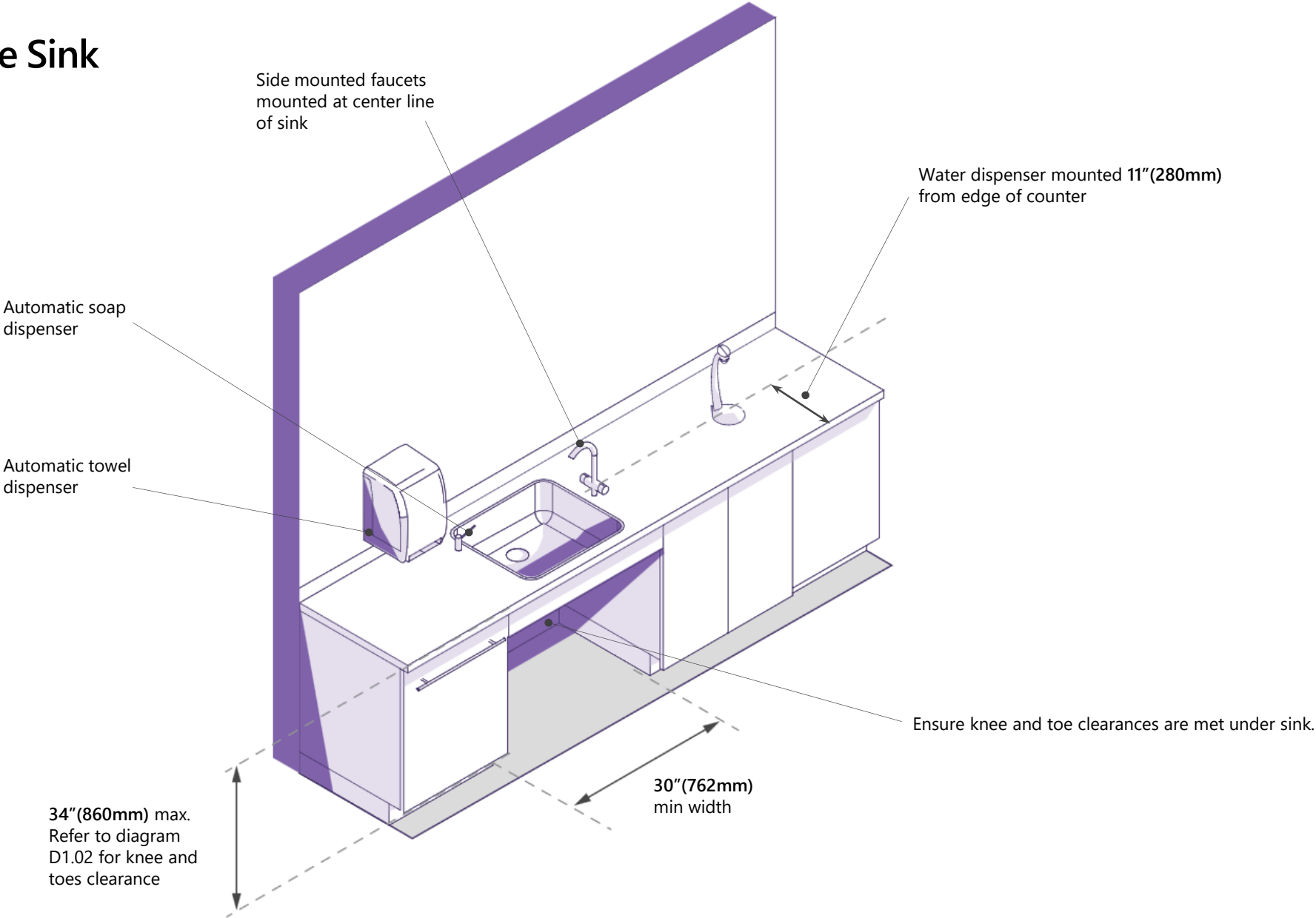
D28 Accessible Amenities



D29 Kitchenettes



D30 Accessible Sink





Thank you.

