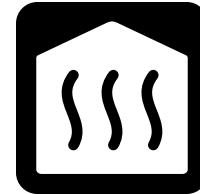




## U.S. ACCESS BOARD TECHNICAL GUIDE

# Saunas and Steam Rooms

This guide explains scoping and technical requirements for saunas and steam rooms in the ADA Standards.



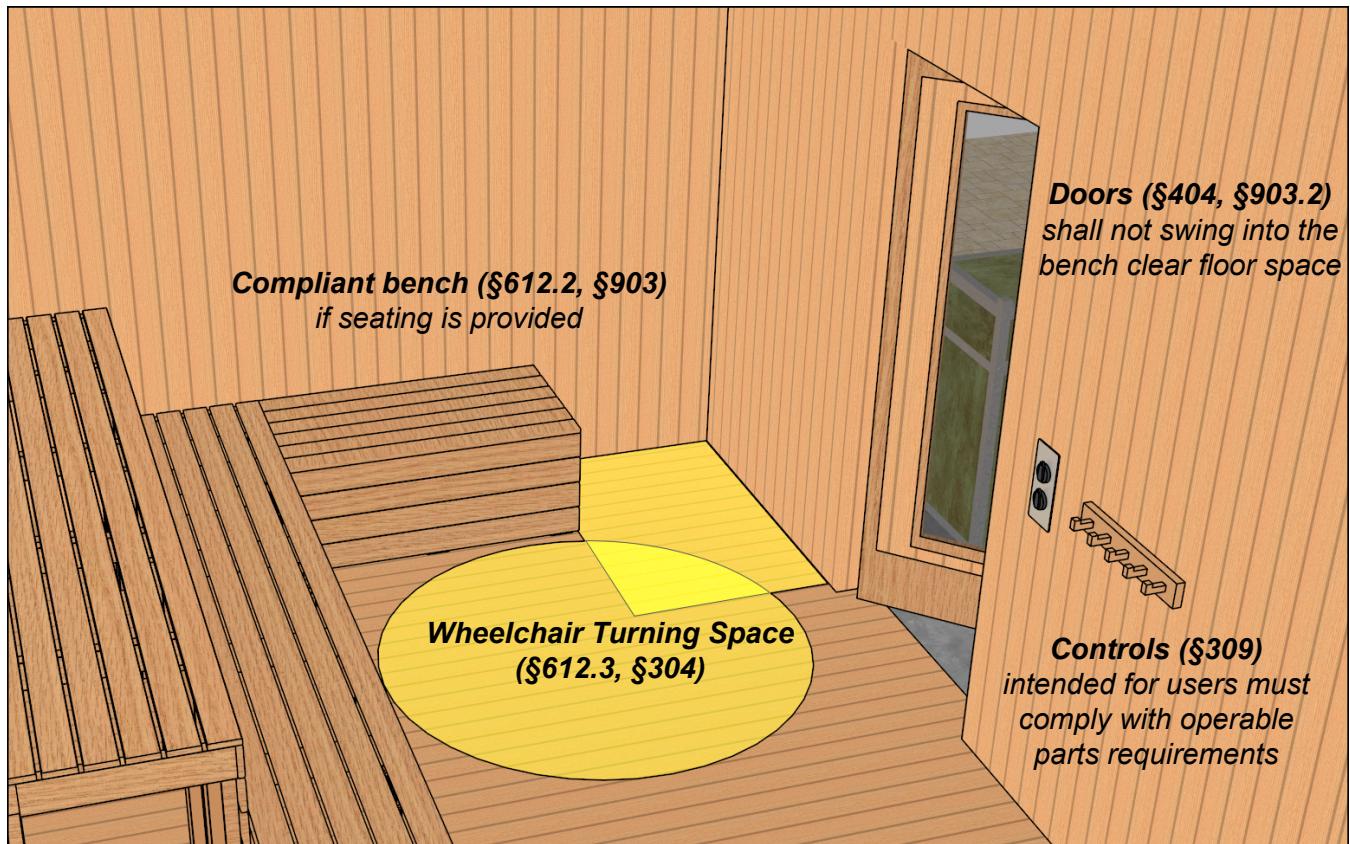
## Required Compliance [§241]

Saunas and steam rooms, where provided, must be accessible. Where two or more saunas or steam rooms are clustered at a single location (i.e., next to, or close to, one another), at least 5%, but no less than one of each type, must comply. Examples of different types include, but are not limited to, those designated by gender or features such as wet or dry heat and temperature capacity.



## Saunas and Steam Rooms [§612]

Requirements for saunas and steam rooms address doors, wheelchair turning space, benches, and controls and other operable parts.

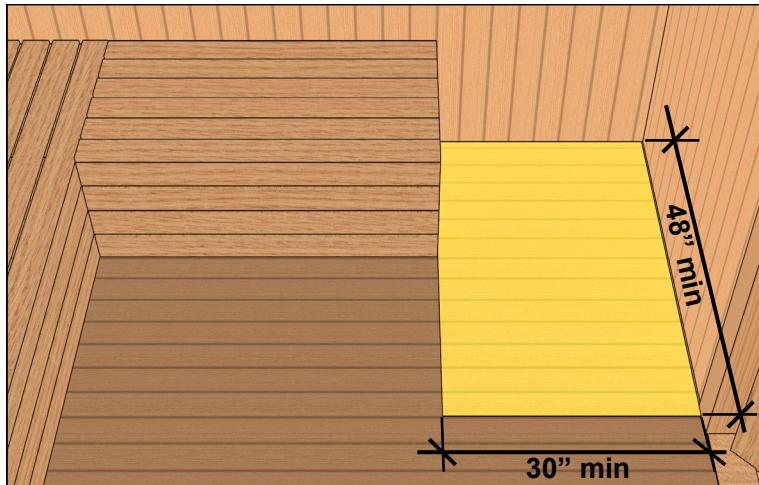


## Turning Space [§612.3, §304]

Wheelchair turning space is required in accessible saunas and steam rooms. This turning space must be a 60" diameter circle or T-shaped. Readily removable benches may obstruct the turning space, but it is advisable that they be placed outside the turning space.

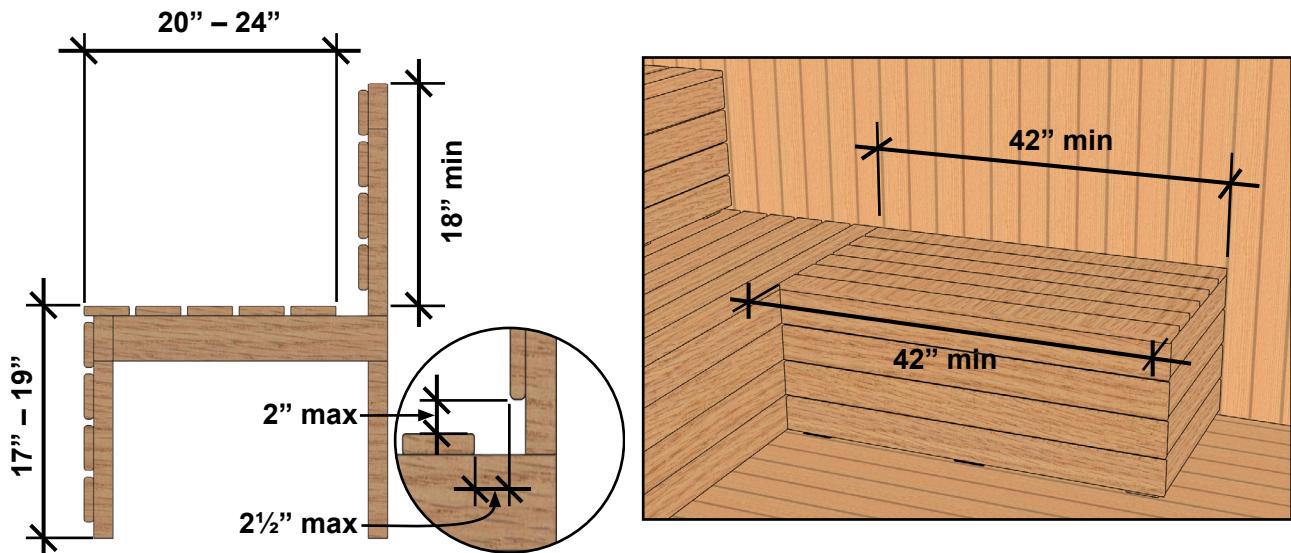
## Benches [§612.2, §903]

Seating in saunas and steam rooms must have at least one compliant bench when seating is provided. The accessible bench must be fixed or built in. Unobstructed clear floor space 30" minimum by 48" minimum is required at the end of the bench and parallel to the short side of the bench. Doors cannot swing into this space. Other readily removable benches may obstruct the clear floor space of the accessible bench, but it is advisable that they be placed outside this space.



*Clear Floor Space is required at the end of the bench and parallel to the short axis of the bench.*

The seat of the bench must be 42" long minimum, 20" to 24" deep, and 17" to 19" high. Walls may be used as back support for the bench. Benches not fixed to the wall must provide back support that is 42" long minimum, extends from a point 2" maximum above the seat surface to a point 18" minimum above the seat surface, and is 2½" maximum from the rear edge of the seat measured horizontally (§903.4).



The structural strength of benches and back support must withstand a vertical or horizontal force of 250 lbs. In wet locations, the surface of the seat must be slip resistant and not accumulate water.

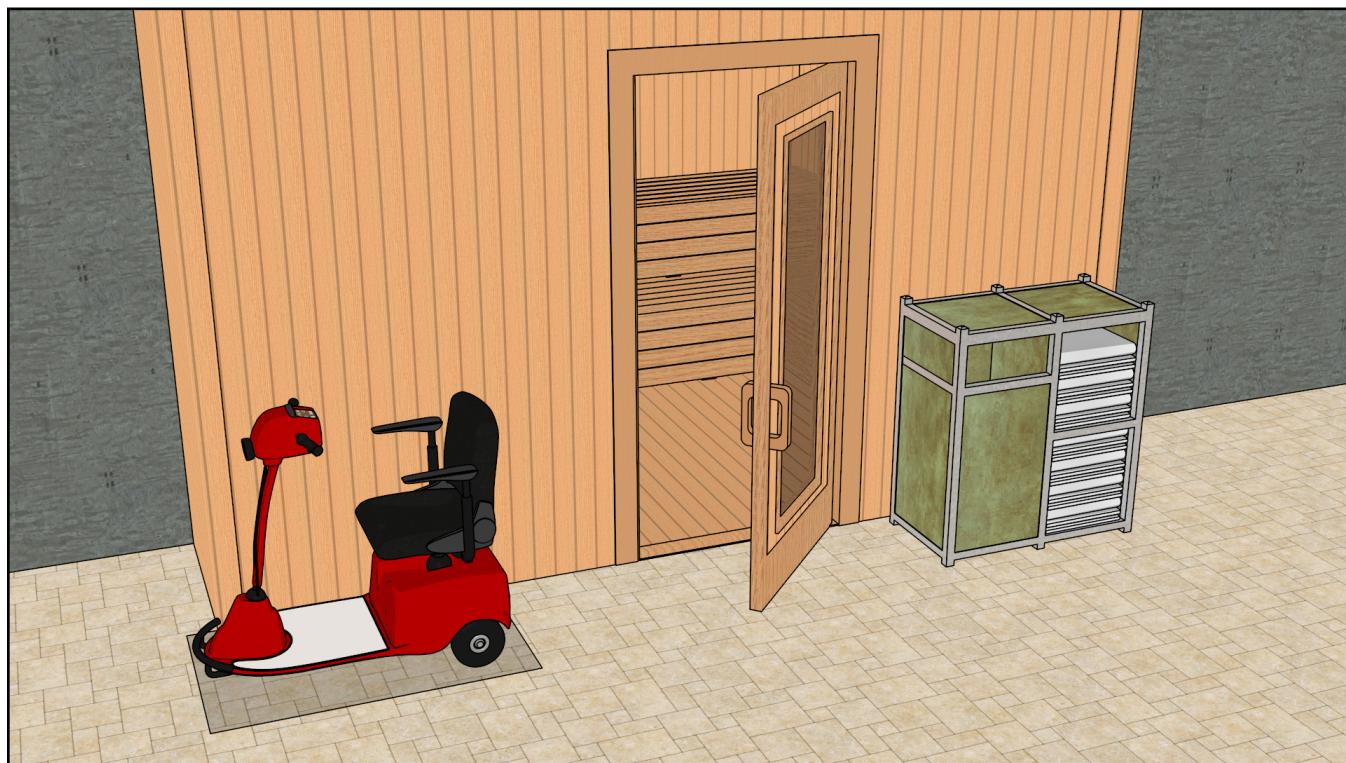
## Doors [§404]

Doors to saunas and steam rooms must meet all applicable requirements, including those for clear width (32" minimum), maneuvering clearance, thresholds, hardware, opening force (5 pounds of force maximum), closing speed, and smooth surfacing at the bottom of the push side. Doors that have a window or glazed panel that permits viewing shall have the bottom edge of the panel no higher than 43" above the floor so that it can be used from a seated position. If the bottom edge of a window or glazed panel is higher than 66" above the floor, it is not intended for viewing.

If thresholds are provided at doorways, they cannot exceed  $\frac{1}{2}$ " high. The edge must be beveled 1:2 maximum above a height of  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Where changes in level are higher than  $\frac{1}{2}$ " because of pre-fabricated unit configurations, compliant ramps and landings must be provided.

If entrance landings and ramps are provided to doors, they must accommodate door maneuvering clearances. Maneuvering clearances for wheelchairs apply to both sides of the entry door. Doors cannot swing into the clear floor space required at benches.

For more information on door requirements, see the *Entrances, Doors, and Gates Guide*.



**Recommendation:** Some users may leave their mobility device outside the sauna or steam room. Where possible, space should be available outside saunas or steam rooms and near the entrance (but outside the door maneuvering clearance) for mobility devices.

## Common Questions



*Is access required to all saunas or steam rooms when clustered?*

Where two or more saunas or steam rooms are clustered at a single location, no more than 5% of the saunas and steam rooms, but no fewer than one, of each type in each cluster shall comply (§241).

*Can the entrance to saunas and steam rooms be ramped?*

Yes, ramps can serve accessible routes to saunas and steam rooms. However, ramp landings and door maneuvering clearances must be level. Entrance landings must also be designed to accommodate door maneuvering clearances.

*Is space for storing a wheelchair or other mobility device required?*

No, wheelchair storage space is not required, but it is advisable to provide adequate space outside of the accessible route and door maneuvering clearance for those who wish to leave their mobility device outside the sauna or steam room.

*Do requirements for floor or ground surfaces apply to saunas and steam rooms?*

Yes, floor or ground surfaces in saunas and steam rooms must be stable, firm, and slip resistant and meet all applicable requirements in §302 of the standards.

*What is the door width requirement for saunas and steam rooms?*

Doors must meet all requirements of §404 and have a clear opening width of 32" minimum. There is no exception for saunas or steam rooms.

*Are windows or vision lights on doors required?*

No. But if provided, vision lights and glazing panels that permit viewing shall have the bottom of at least one panel 43" maximum above the finish floor.

*Must saunas and steam rooms be identified by the International Symbol of Accessibility (ISA)?*

Labeling accessible saunas and steam rooms with the ISA is required only where inaccessible ones are present. At least 5% of saunas and steam rooms of the same type in each cluster must comply and be identified by the ISA unless all are accessible (§213.2., Ex. 3, §216.8).

*Are rules or informational signage required?*

Information signage is not required. However, where provided, informational signs, such as rules of conduct, must comply with requirements for visual characters (§703.5). Signs are more legible for persons with low vision when characters contrast as much as possible with their background.

*If clothes hooks or shelves are provided, do they need to be accessible?*

Yes, storage elements, including clothes hooks or shelves, must comply (§225.2). At least one of each type of storage must be within reach range.

*Do controls for saunas and steam rooms need to comply with operable parts requirements?*

Yes, controls intended for users need to comply with operable parts requirements (§309). Controls must be within reach range and operable with one hand and without tight grasping, pinching, twisting of the wrist, or more than 5 lbf to operate.

*Can sauna and steam room walls be used to provide back support for benches?*

Yes, walls maybe used as back support. Where benches are provided, designs providing full back support are advisable but not required.

*Can the bench back support be tilted or must it be at a right angle to the seat?*

Bench backrests can be sloped in order to provide stability for users. Back support must be within 2.5" horizontally to the rear edge of the bench seat (§903.4).



UNITED STATES ACCESS BOARD

Advancing Full Access and Inclusion for All

1331 F Street, NW • Suite 1000 • Washington, DC 20004-1111  
(202) 272-0080 (v) • (202) 272-0082 (TTY) • [www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov)

September 2021