



U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

Minneapolis Field Office
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<http://www.hud.gov/local/min/minhome.html>

MEMORANDUM: Minneapolis Multifamily HUB Lenders

SUBJECT: Circular 04-01; Ambulatory Travel Distances in FHA Multifamily Projects

DATE: February 18, 2004

This circular clarifies our position regarding ambulatory travel distance limits in multifamily projects with elevators. Consider the following references:

-**ANSI** (American National Standards Institute): ANSI A117.1-1986, A 4.3.1 (1) *Travel Distances*; estimates travel time of about two minutes per 100'. It states that persons with certain disabilities find it difficult and time consuming to travel more than 100' without having to rest, which is estimated to be two minutes. 200' for many disabled people could take four minutes.

-**MHFA** 2004 Housing Tax Credit Design Standards 2 and 3 require the distance between the elevator and the farthest unit not to exceed 120 feet.

-**FFHA** "accessible route" is required for at least one level...but does not require an elevator.

-**MPS** requires an elevator for senior buildings with 3 or more floors.

-**811 program** requires elevators for buildings with 2 or more floors.

-**California Building Code** (Part 2, Title 24, Section 1103B): "...an accessible means of vertical access via ramp, elevator or lift shall be provided within 200 feet of travel of each stairs and each escalator."

Based on related discussions with local experts in multi-family housing design, we are hereby adopting the following applicable guidelines:

- **In multi-family housing developments where an accessible route is required, the maximum distance between elevator(s) and the farthest apartment's entry shall not exceed 200 feet.**
- **In developments designed specifically for the disabled or elderly (including all age-restricted projects), these distances may not exceed 120 feet.**

Where special circumstances emerge (e.g., site constraints, undue financial burdens, etc.), and the above referenced distances must be exceeded, then the developer, design architect, appraiser, or lender must submit the justification/explanation in writing, and provide this office with sufficient documentation that the distance involved will not adversely affect occupancy or cause undue burden on prospective residents.

Questions relating to this circular's application to specific projects should be directed to Said Motamed at (612) 370-3051 x2266.