

## Code Basics

### Efficiency units must comply with the following:

1. A living room of not less than 220 square feet of floor area. An additional 100 square feet of floor area for each occupant of such unit in excess of two.
2. The unit must have a separate closet.
3. The unit must be provided with a kitchen sink, cooking appliance, and refrigerator, each having a clear working space of not less than thirty inches in front. Light and ventilation conforming to this code shall be provided.
4. A separate bathroom containing a water closet, lavatory, and bathtub or shower. ●

## INTERIOR DIMENSIONS

For people to have a habitable space in which to live, the IBC requires minimum dimensions in a building. Ceilings in habitable spaces must be a minimum of seven feet, six inches to provide people enough headroom to feel comfortable. A habitable space is defined as a space in a building for living, sleeping, eating, or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces, and similar areas are not considered habitable spaces. The IBC also requires habitable rooms to be a minimum of seven feet in width. This provides adequate room for furniture and space for the intended activity. The only exception to this rule is kitchens for which a minimum clear passageway of not less than three feet must be provided. This provision is typically applied to residential occupancies and is consistent with the requirements in the *International Residential Code*. [Ref. 1208.2]

It is important to pay attention to objects hanging down from the ceiling or sticking out from a wall. When these objects protrude into an area in which people are walking, they can become a hazard. Therefore, the IBC requires that a minimum eighty-inch clearance be provided below such protruding objects. If the clearance cannot be provided, a barrier must be installed below the protruding object. This barrier provides a visual cue for people to see that a danger exists and for people who are visually impaired to hit the barrier with their cane before they hit their head on the protruding object (Figure 5-3). [Ref. 1003.3]

Residential dwelling units are also required to have at least one room that has a minimum of 120 square feet. All other habitable rooms are required to be 70 square feet in area. Kitchens in dwelling units only need to be 50 square feet. One type of dwelling unit that does not have to meet these requirements is an *efficiency unit*. These units are sometimes called *studio apartments* and usually do not have separate sleeping areas. [Ref. 1208.4]



**FIGURE 5-3** Required barrier under projecting structural element (protruding object)

Specific dimensions are also required in other portions of a building. For example, the minimum ceiling height of the exit path is also required to be a minimum of seven feet, six inches. Egress doors must have a minimum clear width of thirty-two inches and a minimum eighty-inch clear height. Disabled accessibility requirements are discussed in Chapter 11. [\[Ref. 1003.2 & 1008.1.1\]](#)