



AN EH DESIGN QUICK GUIDE

Every Clearance Matters Before Construction

The planning dimensions that help kitchens, dining rooms, baths, bedrooms and family rooms work beautifully in real life.

The room has to work.

A beautiful plan is only successful when doors open fully, people can pass comfortably, chairs pull out, and daily routines feel easy.

These are planning benchmarks—not a formula.

Every project is resolved around the architecture, the people who live there, the selected fixtures and appliances, manufacturer requirements, and applicable building codes. EH Design uses dimensions like these as a starting point, then studies how the entire room behaves together.

1

Clearance

The empty space a body, chair, drawer or door needs to move.

2

Projection

How far an open appliance, cabinet door or fixture enters that space.

3

Reach

Whether switches, storage and everyday items sit naturally within use.

4

Scale

How lighting, rugs and furnishings relate to the room—not only to one object.

A PROFESSIONAL NOTE

Appliance and plumbing-fixture rough-ins always follow the final approved product specifications. Never build from a generic dimension alone.

Protect the work aisles.

The distance around an island should be studied with appliance doors open, stools occupied and more than one person moving through the room.



- 1 Work aisle**
 42" for one cook; 48" where two cooks regularly share the zone.
- 2 Pendant height**
 Begin around 30–36" from countertop to fixture bottom, then adjust for fixture scale and sightlines.
- 3 Countertop**
 36" AFF is typical. Seated, baking and accessibility needs may change the working height.
- 4 Island seating**
 Allow about 24" of width per person and plan knee space for the actual stool and counter height.

DO NOT STOP AT THE CLOSED APPLIANCE

Open the refrigerator, oven and dishwasher on the plan. Confirm handle depth, door projection, adjacent drawers and the person standing in front of each one.

The details around the aisle matter too.

A single clearance number cannot explain the whole kitchen. The best plans study overlapping activities.

36"

Walkway

A useful starting point for a non-work passage. Widen where traffic, doors or seating overlap.

42"

One-cook work aisle

Measured counter-front to counter-front—not cabinet box to cabinet box.

48"

Two-cook work aisle

A more comfortable benchmark where multiple people work at once.

24"

Seat width

A practical starting point per stool; arms and swivel clearance may require more.

15"

Counter-height knee depth

A useful target at a 36-inch-high eating surface; resolve structure and brackets early.

ALSO CHECK

Trash pullouts at the sink • oven handles across from the island • refrigerator doors beside walls • dishwasher loading at the clean-up sink • pantry door swing • landing space beside hot appliances • stool backs in the circulation path

SPECIFICATION RULE

The final appliance manufacturer's installation document controls the opening, ventilation and service clearances.

Leave room for the chair to move.

The table, chair, rug and circulation path are one composition. Size each in relationship to the others.



1 Table-to-wall clearance

Begin with at least 36" from the table edge to the wall. Increase it when this is an active path behind occupied chairs.

2 Chandelier

Begin near 30" above the tabletop, then adjust for ceiling height, fixture shape and sightlines.

3 Rug reach

Extend the rug 24-30" beyond the table so a pulled-out chair remains fully supported.

4 Room border

When the room allows, leave at least 12" of visible floor at the walls. Too small a rug makes the room feel smaller.

SCALE BEFORE ORDERING

Tape the full table and rug footprint on the floor. Check every chair position, including the chair nearest a door, cased opening or serving piece.

Make conversation easy.

Furniture spacing should feel close enough for connection without interrupting the primary way through the room.



- 1 Coffee table**
 Keep approximately 14-18" between the coffee table and surrounding seating.
- 2 Main pathways**
 Plan roughly 36" for the routes people use most. Secondary movement may be tighter, but never accidental.
- 3 Rug placement**
 At minimum, place the front legs of each seating piece on the rug. A fuller furniture connection is even better.
- 4 Rug scale**
 Leave about 12" or more of visible floor at walls when possible. Undersized rugs visually shrink the room.

LOOK BEYOND THE FURNITURE PLAN

Check door swings, floor registers, recliner motion, side-table reach, lamp cords and the path from the room to the exterior.

Plan the first and last steps of the day.

A bedroom feels calm when the circulation around the bed is generous and the rug meets your feet when you stand.



1 Bedside clearance

Aim for 30–36" on each accessible side, especially where doors, dressers or seating share the room.

2 Foot-of-bed path

Preserve about 36" when this is a principal route; confirm drawers and doors can open into it.

3 Rug position

The rug should sit beneath the bed and extend 18–24" beyond the sides and foot so bare feet land softly.

4 Rug-to-wall border

Keep at least 12" of visible floor between the rug edge and the walls where the room allows.

BEDSIDE SCONCE • 30-36 INCHES ABOVE THE MATTRESS

Measure from the top of the finished mattress to the fixture—not from an empty floor plan. Confirm the switch is reachable while sitting in bed.

Locate the light-box center.

The rough-in dimension should identify the electrical-box or backplate center from the finished floor—then be checked against the actual fixture.



1 Backplate center

Dimension the light-box center from the finished floor. Do not dimension to the shade top or bottom.

2 Actual fixture

Confirm the backplate size, shade height, projection and switch before the electrician roughs in the box.

3 Task relationship

Measure task lighting from the work surface and seated position. Keep glare out of the direct sightline.

4 Paired fixtures

Coordinate both box centers to the furniture, artwork or mirror they frame—not simply to the wall width.

AFF = ABOVE FINISHED FLOOR

The mounting number is only useful when its endpoint is named. Write: finished floor to electrical-box center.

Small rooms need exact relationships.

In a bath, inches affect comfort, cleaning, reach and the balance of every elevation.



1 Toilet centerline

Plan 16-18" from the toilet centerline to the nearest wall, vanity or other obstruction; verify applicable code.

2 Clear space in front

Aim for 30" in front of the toilet for comfort; project-specific code and room constraints still govern.

3 Vanity height

34-36" AFF is common. Select the sink, faucet, mirror and user height before finalizing.

4 Sconce rough-in

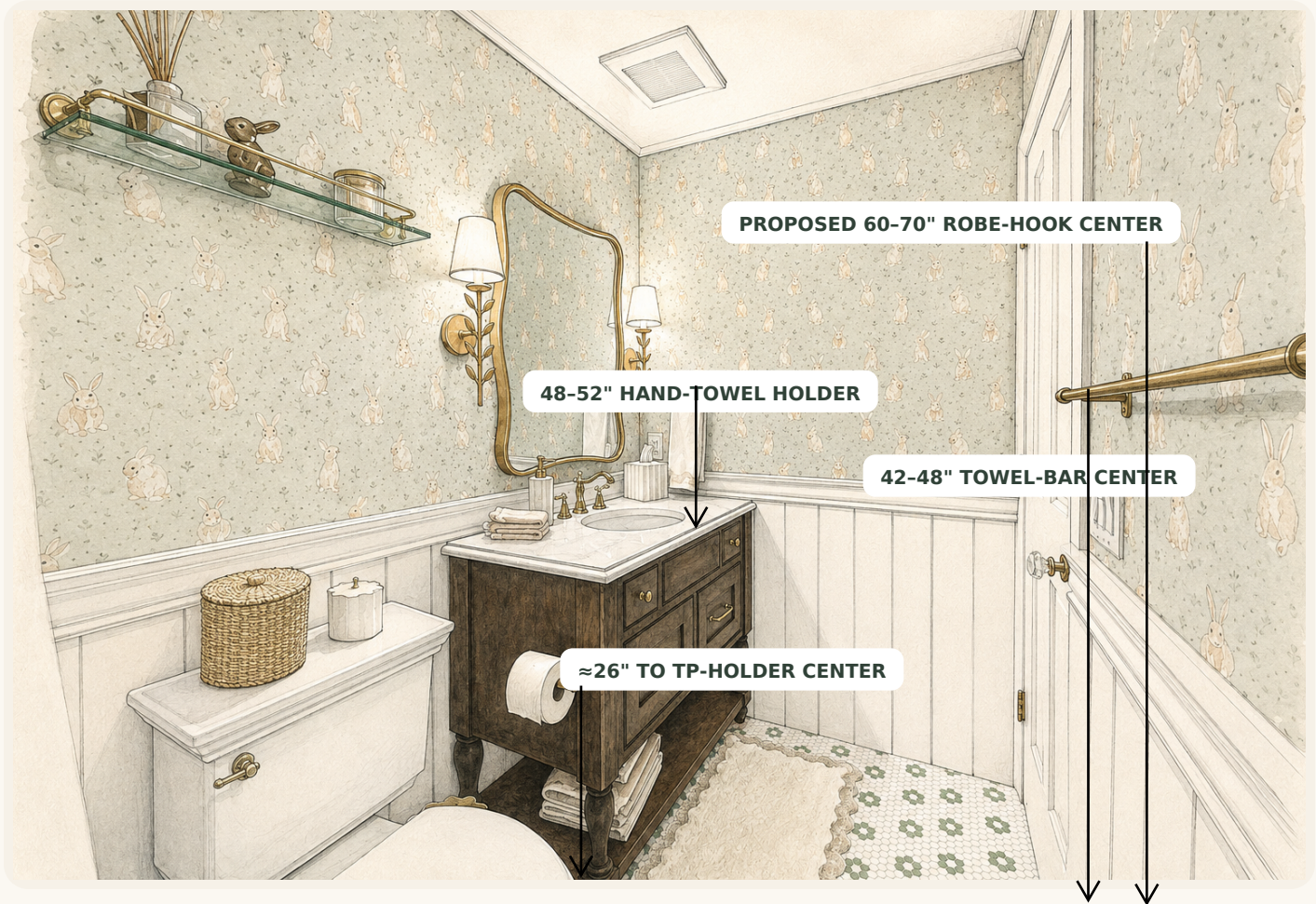
60-66" AFF is a useful starting point. Dimension from finished floor to the center of the electrical box or backplate.

ROUGH-IN AFTER SELECTION

Wall-hung vanities, vessel sinks, medicine cabinets, faucets and decorative traps can all change the correct mounting height.

Place everyday fixtures within reach.

These heights are useful residential starting points. Refine them for the people, fixture style, tile layout and accessible-design goals.



- 1 Toilet-paper holder**
 Begin around 26" AFF and approximately 8-12" in front of the bowl edge for comfortable reach.
- 2 Hand-towel holder**
 Place near 48-52" AFF, then adjust to the counter, towel length and intended user.
- 3 Full towel bar**
 Begin around 42-48" AFF and confirm a full towel clears the counter, toilet and floor.
- 4 Robe hook**
 A 60-70" AFF zone is common; lower it for children, universal use or longer garments.

DIMENSION TO THE USABLE POINT

For a bar, measure to the bar center. For a holder or hook, measure to the point where the towel or robe actually rests.

THE TAKEAWAY

Every clearance is connected.

A room is not a collection of isolated dimensions. It is a sequence of movements, sightlines, reaches and routines—and those relationships are best resolved before construction begins.

The EH Design review

- ☐ Open every door, drawer and appliance on the plan.
- ☐ Trace the main paths through the room.
- ☐ Place furniture and rugs at their true sizes.
- ☐ Confirm lighting from the user's eye level.
- ☐ Build from final product specifications—not assumptions.

Planning a new home or substantial remodel?

EH Design develops the details, documentation and furnishings around how you want the home to feel—and how it needs to work every day.

START A CONVERSATION

Planning references are educational and must be verified for each project, product and jurisdiction.