

Closet Planning Guide

by Bill Huntley

Wow... your new home is everything you've ever dreamed of—spacious rooms, beautiful floors, just the right color scheme, a kitchen to die for...but hold on, who forgot to put a coat closet in the entry? Why are your reach-in closets like long, dark tunnels? The fact is that most building codes have no stated standards or minimum size requirements for closets. For that matter, many codes do not require that a home be built with closets at all. You and your builder are completely on your own, and often a new homeowner is shocked to find that their closets are too small, awkwardly shaped, or placed in inconvenient locations. One third of all new homeowners are unhappy with their storage space. So what is a homebuyer to do?



The good news is that many architects and builders are very aware of current trends in homeowner demands for more and better-organized storage space in today's home. If you are in the process of building or remodeling your home talk to your architect and builder about the size and location of closets as well as the interior design of storage spaces. A big, beautiful walk-in is wasted space if it only contains the minimal single rod and shelf. Planning and budgeting for the interior design of your closets at the outset of a project will insure that your dream home is comfortable and functional for your lifestyle today and that the resale value of your home is maximized into the future. Poorly planned closets can be a demon that taunts every day of your life.



Here are some guidelines you might consider in planning your new home's important storage spaces. These are based on both the good and bad design elements I have observed in the hundreds of closets I have measured and designed.

DOORS:

- Leave 24" on either side of the door in walk-in closets to allow room for hanging at side walls
- If it's a small walk-in consider swinging the door out so you don't have to close yourself into the closet to access clothing.
- Pocket doors afford great access to walk-in closets but may limit the ability to mount units behind door pocket.

- For reach-in closets double out-swing doors (like French doors) allow for maximum accessibility. Bifolds work okay, but block 10" to 12" of access at ends when they are open. Sliding doors only allow access to one-half of the closet at once and may limit accessory choices like drawers or baskets.

WINDOWS:

- 24" from window to sidewall allows space for hanging.
- Space under windows can often accommodate a bench with drawers, a window seat or shelving.



LIGHTING

- Locate switches on the out side of the closet if possible. If it is inside a walk-in closet keep the switch at least 16" from sidewalls to leave space for closet units.
- In walk-ins locate lighting fixtures in the center of the closet or use directed lighting (such as track lighting) that can be aimed at closet sections.
- Avoid placing light fixtures close to walls. The top shelf of the closet will block lighting and your closet shelves and clothing will be in shadow. Mount fixtures above door headers for reach-in closets

WALL HEIGHTS

- The minimum useful height for knee walls at eaves is 42". Four feet or higher is better.
- The minimum height for double hanging options 84".
- The minimum height for tall hanging is 66".

REACH-IN CLOSETS

- The Ideal depth is 24" to 27". Deeper reach-ins waste space. Less than 22" deep is too narrow for hanging clothing.
- Avoid tunnel closets. If the depth beyond the doorjamb is greater than 24" it is impossible to access clothing.



is

WALK-IN CLOSETS

- A minimum width of 5'- 6" allows for closet units on both sidewalls and the end wall.
- The minimum width needed to fit an island is 11'.
- Double hanging is difficult to fit on walls with baseboard heaters.

- Avoid corner shelves in walk-in closets. They are difficult to adjust and tend to get jammed or overcrowded with folded clothing.
- Corner shelves are useful in pantries.

SHOE SHELVES

- Allow 9" per pair of woman's shoes, 10" for men's shoes.
- Slanted shoe shelves use more space than regular shoe shelves.



CLOSET ROD HEIGHTS

The heights for hanging rods may vary according to specific individuals or garments, but these are some typical heights to use a general guideline. Folks over 6'-1" might consider raising these measurements to a taller height. It is always a good idea to measure your clothing on its hanger when planning your closet layout. This will avoid design shortfalls and disappointment in your new closet.

- Tall hanging—65" : for long dresses and long coats
- Medium hanging—48" : recommended for pants hung by the cuff, long skirts and medium length dresses.
- Short hanging—40" : This height accommodates most shirts and blouses, folded trousers, suits and sports jackets.
- Double hanging—The minimum height for a double hanging rod is seven feet so that each rod can accommodate 40" of hanging space. This is the equivalent of two short hanging sections stacked one above the other.



closetplace

603.569.5609

consult@closetplace.com

Print out this closet inventory form to discuss your closet storage needs with your designer.

Name: _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Closet: _____
Reach-in Walk-in Master bedroom Hers His Kids Laundry Pantry Garage Storage

Existing closet _____ New construction _____

Closet size:
Reach-in _____ inches walk-in _____ inches X _____ inches

Door style: bi-fold _____ single hinged _____ double hinged _____ slider _____ pocket _____

How can we help you improve the usefulness of this closet?

Needs/Preferences: List number of items or length required

Long Hanging (66" H): _____

Short Hanging (39" H): _____

Medium Hanging (45 1/2" H): _____

Shelving: _____

W/Doors? _____

Drawers? _____

Shoes: #pairs _____

Ties: _____

Belts: _____

Accessories: Handbags _____ Hats _____ other _____

Other Storage needs: Blankets Pillows Sports equip. Suitcases Storage boxes Boots