BIG FLOOR PLANS · COLLEGE & TRADES TRACK · 50 MINUTES

Walk the Patient Room: teacher script

Nursing, healthcare-design and interior-design students tape a patient room at full size, test the bedside and foot clearances with their own bodies, then fix the layout the way hospital user groups do before the walls go up.

Prep: Tape the 13 ft x 15 ft room. Mark the headwall (north). Tape 24-in-deep casework along the west wall, 8 ft long. Tape the bed 39 x 90 in, centered east-west, head against the headwall. Tape the recliner 36 x 36 in with its near edge 30 in past the bed foot. Print one check sheet per team.

Min	Step and what to do	Ask	Listen for
0-5	**Hook** Stand the class around the taped bed. "A nurse, a patient lift and a family member all need to fit here at 3 a.m. Do they?"	Where would you measure from?	From the bed and from fixed things, not from the walls.
5-12	**Model** Measure the right side: bed edge to the east wall. Compare with 36 in.	Pass or fail?	58 1/2 in: passes.
12-28	**Teams check** Teams measure the left side (bed to casework), the foot (bed to recliner) and compute the clear floor area.	Which checks fail, and by how much?	Left 34 1/2 in, foot 30 in: both under 36 in.
28-38	**Act it out** One student walks a lift or wheelchair route around the bed; one stands as the visitor in the recliner.	Where does care get blocked?	At the casework side and at the foot.
38-46	**Fix and re-measure** Teams move the bed and the recliner the smallest distances that pass, re-tape and re-measure.	What is the smallest fix?	Bed 1 1/2 in east; recliner 6 in south.
46-50	**Exit ticket** Individual exit ticket.		

Common misconceptions

- **Learners may think:** If the room is big enough, the clearances are fine. **Address it:** This room has 179 sq ft clear, well over 120, and still fails two clearances. Area and clearance are separate checks.
- **Learners may think:** Centering the bed is always right. **Address it:** Centered ignores the casework; the bed has to sit where both sides pass.

Supports

- Give the inch-reading card and pre-labeled tape strips for the bed and the recliner.
- Multilingual learners: label bed, casework, recliner, headwall and foot on the floor with pictures.
- Mobility: a seated student can be the recorder or the patient; the wheelchair route is a real test, not a role.

References

- **FGI Guidelines for Design and Construction of Hospitals**: single-patient medical/surgical room: 120 sq ft minimum clear floor area; 3 ft minimum clearance at the sides and foot of the bed (check the edition your program uses)
- **Perkins V (CTE)**: postsecondary and secondary CTE program context

Scenario sheet

Single patient room, interior 13 ft (east-west) x 15 ft (north-south). Headwall = north wall. Casework 24 in deep x 8 ft long on the west wall. Bed 39 in x 90 in, head at the headwall, centered east-west as taped. Recliner 36 x 36 in, near edge 30 in past the foot of the bed.

Criteria as quoted for this review: at least 3 ft (36 in) clear at each side and at the foot of the bed, measured to the nearest fixed obstruction; at least 120 sq ft of clear floor area, not counting built-in casework. Check the FGI edition your program uses.

LEARNER SHEET · WALK THE PATIENT ROOM

Name _____ Date _____

Check	Measured	Needs	Pass / fail
Left side: bed to casework		36 in	
Right side: bed to east wall		36 in	
Foot: bed to recliner		36 in	
Clear floor area (sq ft)		120	

Fix (move the fewest things the shortest distance)

Move what	Which way	How far	Re-measured

User-group comments

Where	What we found	What we ask for

Exit ticket

1. The bed is 40 in from the west wall and the casework is 24 in deep. Side clearance?

2. A room is 12 x 11 ft with no casework. Does it meet 120 sq ft?

3. Write one user-group comment for the foot clearance as taped.

Answer key

Check	Answer
Bed position	(156 - 39) / 2 = 58 1/2 in from the west wall
Left side	58 1/2 in - 24 in casework = 34 1/2 in: fails by 1 1/2 in
Right side	156 - 97 1/2 in = 58 1/2 in: passes
Foot	30 in: fails by 6 in
Clear floor area	13 x 15 = 195 sq ft - casework 2 x 8 = 16 sq ft = 179 sq ft: passes
Fix	Bed 1 1/2 in east (left 36 in, right 57 in); recliner 6 in south (foot 36 in). All pass.

Exit ticket

1. The bed is 40 in from the west wall and the casework is 24 in deep. Side clearance?
   Answer: 16 in: far under 36 in.
2. A room is 12 x 11 ft with no casework. Does it meet 120 sq ft?
   Answer: 132 sq ft: yes.
3. Write one user-group comment for the foot clearance as taped.
   Answer: Foot of bed to recliner is 30 in; needs 36 in. Move the recliner 6 in south.

Scoring: Item 1: 1 point. Item 2: 1 point. Item 3: 2 points (measurement and fix). 3 or more = secure.

Free to copy for teaching. Big Floor Plans, Walk the Patient Room, 2026. Codes and standards change: use the edition your jurisdiction or program adopted. Full-size prints: bigfloorplans.com/get-a-quote