

Carroll County Bureau of Permits and Inspection

Residential Code Compliance Guidelines

FINISHED BASEMENTS

The following list of code requirements is intended to assist you in complying with the Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances of Carroll County, Chapter 170, but does not encompass the entire code. (See: www.carrollcountymd.gov for current codes and links to ICC ecodes.) Failure to comply with all applicable code requirements will result in a notice of violation and/or Stop Work Order until such violations are corrected.

THE BUILDING PERMIT AND ONE SET OF APPROVED DRAWINGS MUST BE MADE AVAILABLE AT THE SITE FOR THE REQUIRED INSPECTION.

Should you have any questions regarding these requirements, please call 410-386-2674.

1. PLAN REQUIREMENTS

Two copies of the proposed floor plans shall be submitted with the permit application. The plans shall show all of the following:

- a. Entire basement level both finished and unfinished.
- b. All existing or proposed doors and windows located in the exterior walls.
- c. Show all window and door sizes for all existing and proposed openings.
- d. All new partition walls to be built.
- e. All rooms shall be named for intended use.
- f. All construction shall be considered non-structural unless otherwise noted. If structural changes to the existing framing are proposed all appropriate framing details shall be shown on the plans.

2. REQUIRED CEILING HEIGHTS

- a. Unfinished basement 6' - 8", except under beams 6' - 4".
- b. Habitable rooms, except kitchens – 7' minimum for at least 50% of the area.
- c. Furred ceilings not less than 7'.

3. SAFETY GLASS LOCATION

- a. Ingress and egress doors.
- b. Sliding patio door panels, swing door panels.
- c. Storm doors.
- d. Doors and enclosures for hot tubs, whirlpools, spas, steam rooms, bathtubs and shower. Glazing in any part of a building wall enclosing these compartments where the bottom edge of the glazing is less than 60" above the drain inlet and within 60" of water's edge.

- e. Glazing in fixed or operable panel adjacent to a door where the nearest vertical edge is within a 24" arc of the door in a closed position and whose bottom edge is less than 60" above the floor or walking surface.
- f. Windows greater than 9 sq. ft. and bottom edge less than 18" above floor; top edge greater than 36" above floor. One or more walking surfaces within 36" horizontally of the glazing.
- g. Glazing adjacent to stairs where the bottom exposed edge of the glazing is less than 36" above the stairway and within 60" horizontally of the glazing.

4. INSULATION REQUIREMENTS

- a. Minimum R-10 continuous or R-13 cavity insulation shall be installed at all exterior walls for homes built prior to January 4, 2002 to comply with the International Energy Conservation Code as adopted.

5. NON-LOAD BEARING PARTITIONS

- a. Interior non-bearing walls shall be permitted to be constructed with 2"x 3" studs spaced 16" on center or 24" on center, as long as the appropriate type wall finish is installed. 2"x 4", 2"x 6", etc. walls are also acceptable with the correct code complying wall finish.
- b. All walls are required to be capped with at least one single top plate.
- c. All sill plates shall be protected from decay such as pressure treated wood or naturally durable wood.

6. PARTITION FIRE BLOCKING

- a. Fire blocking shall be provided to cut off all concealed draft openings, both vertical and horizontal, and form an effective fire barrier between the basement level and the level above. This is to include but not limited to the space between the partitions top plate and the exterior foundation wall, bulkheads, plumbing pipes, HVAC supply and return, etc....

NOTE: The space between a partition top plate and an exterior foundation wall may be fireblocked, chinked, with fiberglass insulation or mineral wool for spaces of 1" or less. For spaces greater than 1", ½" sheet rock, 23/32" plywood with joints backed or equivalent material. Fire-Retardant spray foam may be used in either application.

7. LIGHT, VENTILATION AND HEATING

- a. Basement – 2% of floor area including door infiltration.
- b. Habitable rooms – 8% of floor area; ½ operable

EXCEPTIONS:

- i. The glazed areas need not be operable where an approved mechanical ventilation system is provided capable of producing a change of air every 30 minutes.

- ii. The glazed areas may be omitted in rooms where an approved mechanical ventilation system is provided capable of producing a change of air every 30 minutes; artificial light is provided capable of producing an average illumination of 6' candles over the area of the room at a height of 30" above the floor level.
- c. Bathrooms – 1 window at least 3 sq. ft. of glazing with ½ openable or exhaust fan ducted to exterior with approved termination fitting in each compartment.

8. EXIT REQUIREMENTS

- a. Basements and every sleeping room shall have at least one door or an exit window with a net clear opening 5.7 sq. ft. with a minimum open width of 20", a minimum open height of 24", and a maximum sill height from floor of 44". Exception, ground floor windows net clear opening reduced to 5.0 sq. ft. **NOTE:** minimum open width of 20" and minimum open height of 24" will not produce 5.7 sq. ft. of net clear opening. Clear opening width in inches x clear opening height in inches = 820 sq. inches.

Exception: Where the dwelling is equipped with an automatic sprinkler system, sleeping rooms in basements shall not be required to have emergency escape and rescue opening provided that the basement has two separate means of egress.

- b. Bars, grills, and screens or other obstructions placed over emergency escape windows shall be releasable from the inside without the use of a key or tool.
- c. Lock or latch on all egress doors shall be readily openable from the side from which egress is to be made without the use of a key.
- d. Enclosed accessible space under stairs shall have walls and soffits protected on enclosed side with ½" dry wall.

9. BASEMENT FURNACE ROOMS

- a. Newly constructed rooms enclosing furnaces shall provide the required make-up air, combustion air, in accordance with the mechanical code, National Fuel Gas Code, and the manufactures installation specifications. When in doubt, please contact our inspection staff for information.

10. SPRINKLER SYSTEM

- a. Existing basements with sprinkler systems may need to have the sprinkler system reconfigured in those areas under construction and is required to be inspected.

11. SMOKE ALARMS/CARBON MOXIDE ALARMS

- a. Installed as required for new dwelling; on each floor, outside of each separate sleeping area and in each sleeping room. See IRC section R314 for further information.
- b. Carbon monoxide alarms installed outside each sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms. See IRC section R315 for further information.