

CITY OF MIDDLETOWN - CREATING HABITABLE SPACE IN BASEMENT

(Applies to existing unfinished basements being converted to habitable space)

This information does not address new construction requirements

The following information is needed to determine whether you can finish off a habitable space (recreation room, etc.) in your basement in accordance with the current State of Connecticut Building Code. (2015 IRC w/2018 State Amendments)

1. Stairs shall not be less than 32" in clear width at all points above the permitted handrail height and below the required headroom height. Connecticut Amendment R311.7.1 (Exception #2).
2. Handrails shall not project more than 4" on either side of the stairway. Connecticut Amendment R311.7.1 (Exception #2).
3. The minimum clear width of stairwell below the handrail height shall not be less than 28" where a handrail is installed on one side and 24" where handrails provided on both sides. R311.7.1 (Exception #2).
4. Headroom on all parts of existing stairway serving existing unfinished basements being converted to a habitable space shall be 6'4" measured vertically from sloped plane adjoining the tread nosing of from the floor surface of the landing or platform. Connecticut Amendment R311.7.2 (Exception).
5. Riser height – maximum riser height for existing stairs serving an unfinished basement shall be 9". The greatest riser height within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8". Connecticut Amendment R311.7.5.1 (Exception 1).
6. Tread depth – minimum tread depth of existing stairs serving unfinished basements being converted to habitable space shall be 8". The tread depth shall be measured horizontally between the vertical planes of the foremost projection of adjacent treads and at a right angle to the treads leading edge. The greatest tread depth within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8". Connecticut Amendment R311.7.5.2 (Exception)
7. Handrails shall be provided on at least one side of each continuous run of treads or flight with 4 or more risers and returned to wall or post. A minimum of 1 1/2" space required between handrail and wall. Section R311.7.8. See code for specific requirements on size of handrail.
8. Ceiling height – minimum ceiling height in existing basements being converted to habitable space shall not be less than 6'6" clear, except under beams, girders, pipes, ducts or other obstructions where clear height shall be a minimum of 6'4". Connecticut Amendment R305.1.1 (Exception #2).
9. If planning to use for sleeping purposes emergency egress window required. Window shall have a clear opening size of 5.7 square feet and maximum of 44" from finished floor to sill height. Other considerations apply, but are beyond scope of this handout. Please refer to Building Code including Connecticut Amendment R310.1.
10. Bring in a scaled drawing showing ENTIRE basement with locations of all utilities such as a boiler, furnace, hot water heater and electrical panel. If you have a wood burning stove or fireplace or a gas fireplace show these as well. Label all areas in basement to show their intended use.

11. Indicate type of heat source to be utilized for space. R303.9
12. Indicate insulation value and type to be utilized. N1102.1.1
13. Indicate framing type to be used, including type of material to be used for bottom plate.
14. Make up and combustion air must be addressed.
15. Fire blocking Section R302.11 of the 2015 IRC
16. Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors are to be provided as stated in the 2015 IRC sections R314 and R315

The Middletown Building Department is offering this informational handout as a representative of typical issues or questions that may arise on a job. The city assumes no responsibility for any errors or omissions and the installer is required to follow all applicable codes.