



TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD

CREATING HABITABLE SPACE IN BASEMENT/ATTIC

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

This information does not represent all of the required codes. It is to be used as a guide. 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. (2021 IRC w/2022 State Amendments)

1. Ceiling height – minimum ceiling height in existing basements being converted to habitable space shall not be less than 6’8”(R305.1) clear, except under beams, girders, pipes, ducts or other obstructions where clear height shall be a minimum of 6’4”. R305.1. (Exception #3).
2. If planning to use for sleeping purposes emergency egress window required. Window shall have a clear opening size of 5.7 square feet ,5. Square feet at grade and a maximum of 44” from finished floor to sill height. Other considerations apply, but are beyond scope of this handout. Please refer to R310.2.
3. Stairs shall not be less than 32” in clear width at all points above the permitted handrail height and below the required headroom height.r311.7.1 (Exception #2).
4. 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. R311.7.2 (Exception 2).
5. 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. R311.7.2 (Exception #2).
6. 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 (Exception1).
7. 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”. R311.7.5.2 (Exception)
8. 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 ½” space required between handrail and wall. Section R311.7.8 See code for specific requirements on size of handrail.
9. 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.
10. Indicate type of heat source to be utilized for space. R303.9
11. Indicate insulation value and type to be utilized. N1102.1
12. Indicate framing type to be used, including type of material to be used for bottom plate.
13. Make up and combustion air must be addressed.
14. Provide Fire blocking in accordance with Section R302.11 of the 2012 IRC
15. Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors are to be provided as stated in the 2012 IRC sections R314 andR315

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REV 10/14/2022

Please bring in scaled plans (2 sets) of the ENTIRE basement, with room layouts labeled with planned uses of the new rooms and existing spaces. Include the following information:

1. Lowest finished ceiling height _____. (A) Height under lowest beam, pipe, duct or other obstruction after ceiling finishes installed_____.
2. Sleeping rooms proposed? (Circle one) YES or NO
3. Stairwell width _____.
4. Stairwell width including handrail _____.
5. Headroom on stairway _____.
6. Riser height _____.
7. Tread depth _____.
8. Type of framing to be used (metal, wood, basement system, etc.)_____
9. Insulation value and type_____
10. Show total square footage of entire basement _____.
11. Type of heat source to be used **for space**_____ .
12. Do you have a wood fireplace or pellet stove in basement? (Circle one) YES or NO
13. Do you have gas/oil fired heaters in basement? (Circle one) YES or NO
14. Is makeup air needed for the appliances? (Circle one) YES or NO, if yes please describe the type of ventilation that will be provided._____.

Pursuant to section 29-315b of the Connecticut General Statutes, whenever a dwelling is occupied during interior alterations or additions requiring a building permit, the temporary installation of battery-operated smoke alarms shall be required in the vicinity of such alterations or additions for the duration of construction activities. A combined smoke and carbon monoxide alarm may be installed to comply with R315.2.3 and this section.

Smoke alarms shall be installed in the following locations:

1. In each sleeping room.
2. Outside each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms.
3. On each additional story of the dwelling, including basements and habitable attics and not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. In dwellings or dwelling units with split levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level shall suffice for the adjacent lower level provided that the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level.
4. Not less than 3 feet (914 mm) horizontally from the door or opening of a bathroom that contains a bathtub or shower unless this would prevent placement of a smoke alarm required by this section.
5. In the hallway and in the room open to the hallway in dwelling units where the ceiling height of a room open to a hallway serving bedrooms exceeds that of the hallway by 24 inches (610 mm) or more.

R314.3.1 Installation Near Cooking Appliances

Smoke alarms shall not be installed in the following locations unless this would prevent placement of a smoke alarm in a location required by Section R314.3.

1. Ionization smoke alarms shall not be installed less than 20 feet (6096 mm) horizontally from a permanently installed cooking appliance.
2. Ionization smoke alarms with an alarm-silencing switch shall not be installed less than 10 feet (3048 mm) horizontally from a permanently installed cooking appliance.
3. Photoelectric smoke alarms shall not be installed less than 6 feet (1828 mm) horizontally from a permanently installed cooking appliance.
4. Smoke alarms listed and marked "helps reduce cooking nuisance alarms" shall not be installed less than 6 feet (1828 mm) horizontally from a permanently installed cooking appliance.

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