



OFFICE OF THE WOODBURY BUILDING OFFICIAL

Town of Woodbury ~ Woodbury, Connecticut
281 Main Street South ~
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GARY J. TESTA ~ BUILDING OFFICIAL

CREATING HABITABLE SPACE IN BASEMENT

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

This information does not address new construction requirements. Please bring in scaled plans (3 sets) of the ENTIRE basement, with room layouts labeled with planned uses of the new rooms and existing spaces.

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.

- 1.** Stairs shall not be less than 31-1/2" 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 4-1/2" 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 6'6" measured vertically from sloped plane adjoining the tread nosing or 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 R311.7.4.1 (Exception).
- 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 R311.7.4.2 (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. Height of top of handrail shall be 34" to 38" above tread nosing. Section R311.7.7. 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 6'10" clear, except under beams, girders, pipes, ducts or other obstructions where clear height shall be a minimum of 6'4". Connecticut Amendment R305.1 (Exception #5).
- 9.** If planning to use for sleeping purposes emergency egress window required.
Window shall have a clear opening size of 5 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.** A scaled drawing is required 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. R303.8
- 12.** Indicate insulation value and type to be utilized. N1102.2
- 13.** Indicate framing type to be used, including type of material to be used for bottom plate. R106.1.1
- 14.** Make up and combustion air must be addressed. A handout is available to help you address this issue. Please note on your drawing the number of INPUT BTU's on all fuel fired appliances. (I.e. gas or oil) If you have a gas dryer include this as well.
- 15.** Fire blocking Section 302.11 and 302.11.1 information available at the building department.

The Woodbury Building Department is offering this informational handout as a representative of typical issues or questions that may arise on a typical job. The town assumes no responsibility for any errors, omissions and installer is required to follow all applicable codes. No handout could possibly cover all situations, nor is it intended to.

Please feel free to call us if we may be of further assistance.