

Boone County Building Department

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Finished Basement

This handout serves *only* as a guide and does not contain all of the requirements of Boone County Building Codes.

A permit is required for any finishing work within a basement.

Required information when applying for a permit:

- Floor plan: indicating dimensions of all rooms with each room labeled for its use, finished ceiling height, total square footage of finished area, and location of any plumbing fixtures.
- Health Department Approval: for bedroom addition only
- Building Permit Application: value of construction, owner information, contractor information including electrical and plumbing license numbers as well as plumber's contractor's number

Guidelines for building a finished basement:

- Minimum Ceiling Height: Habitable rooms, hallways, corridors, bathrooms, toilet rooms, laundry rooms, and basements, shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet. The required height shall be measured from the finished floor to the lowest projection from the ceiling.
Exceptions:
 1. Beams and girders spaced not less than 4 feet on center may project not more than 6 inches below the required ceiling height.
- Under stair protection: Enclosed accessible space under stairs shall be enclosed with ½" gypsum board.
- Egress windows: Basements with habitable space and every sleeping room shall have at least one openable emergency escape with a sill height of not more than 44 inches. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency egress and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room, but shall not be required in adjoining areas of the basement. Minimum net clear opening must be 5 square feet for grade floor windows. Minimum net clear opening height shall be 24 inches. Minimum net clear opening width shall be 20 inches. The window must be capable of opening without the use of a key or tool. The required opening dimensions must be achieved by the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening from the inside. Where a window is used as the emergency escape and rescue opening, then it must be the usual double-hung, horizontal sliding, or casement window operated by the turn of a crank. Windows that achieve the required opening dimensions by the removal of sashes or mullions are not permitted.
- Window wells: The minimum horizontal area of a window well shall be 9 square feet with a minimum horizontal projection and width of 36 inches. Window wells with a depth greater than 44 inches require a ladder. The ladder shall be permitted to encroach a maximum of 6 inches into the required dimensions of the window well. Ladders or rungs shall have an inside width of at least 12 inches, shall project at least 3 inches from the wall, and shall be spaced not more than 18 inches on center vertically for the full height of the window well.
- Protection against decay: All lumber in contact with concrete must be treated.
- Fireblocking: Fireblocking shall be provided to cut off all concealed draft openings (both horizontal and vertical) and to form a fire barrier between stories. Fireblocking shall be provided in the following locations: (1) In concealed spaces of stud walls and partitions including furred space, at the ceiling and floor level, and at 10 foot intervals both vertical and horizontal. (2) At all interconnections between concealed vertical and horizontal spaces such as soffits, drop ceilings, and cove ceilings. (3) In concealed spaces between stair stringers at the top and bottom of the run. (4) At openings around vents, pipes, and ducts at ceiling and floor level, with an approved material to resist the free passage of flame and products of combustion.

Required inspections:

Pre-Permit: Prior to the issuance of a permit, an inspection shall be performed to assess the existing windows for egress standards.

Rough-in: Before insulating, but after electrical and plumbing are roughed-in and approved.

Insulation: Once insulation is installed, but before the installation of any coverings.

Final: When structure is completed and electrical and plumbing final inspections have been approved, but before occupancy.