



CITY OF WATERTOWN

Department of Building Inspections

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BASEMENT FINISHING GUIDELINES

This information is a guide to the most common questions and problems. It is not intended nor shall it be considered a complete set of requirements.

REQUIRED PERMITS:

- Building Permit Application
- Plumbing, heating and electrical permits may also be required. (Electrical is done by the MN State Board of Electricity 651-284-5026 or www.dli.mn.gov.)
- Any fireplaces will need a separate mechanical permit.

PLAN REQUIREMENTS

- Two sets of plans showing basement layout indicating use of each room, proposed walls, doors, windows, smoke detectors, sump baskets, furnace and water heaters, etc. Combustion air to furnace area is required.

GENERAL CODE REQUIREMENTS

1. Bottom plate of proposed walls shall be treated in houses built before March 31, 2003.
2. Enclosed closets under stairs must be entirely finished with a minimum ½” gypsum board
3. Smoke detectors are required on all levels of the house and in all sleeping rooms. Hard wire in new construction and battery operated in existing area. Centrally locate smoke detectors in hallways or in the area giving access to each sleeping room. Smoke detectors may be required in other rooms.
4. Basements and each bedroom shall be provided with an escape window having:
 - a. An overall minimum clear openable area of 5.7 square feet (821 square inches)
 - b. A minimum clear opening height dimension of 24 inches.
 - c. A minimum clear opening width dimension of 20 inches.
 - d. A finished sill height of not more than 44 inches.
 - e. A window well if window is below grade, with a 9 square foot net clear opening with window fully opened.
 - f. A permanent ladder in the window well if it is greater than 44 inches from top of well to ground inside of well. Window well must be “upsized” to accommodate the ladder.

5. Each water closet shall be centered in a clear space of not less than 30 inches in width and have a clear space in front of the water closet of not less than 24 inches. The water closet is to be a 1.6 gallon flush.
6. Dissimilar materials must not be attached to each other. i.e. PVC must not be glued to ABS waste and vent.
7. An approved anti-scald (thermostatic or pressure balancing type) faucet must be installed in a new shower or shower/bath combination.
8. Each bathroom shall be provided with an openable window or powered exhaust fan venting to the outside. The last 3 feet of exhaust duct at its discharge must be insulated (minimum R-3) Showers must be capable of encompassing a 30" circle measured at the height of the shower control handles. Bath tubs used as showers not included.
9. Furnaces shall have an unobstructed working space of not less than 30 inches in front of them and shall be provided with outside combustion air. Provide minimum clearance for furnace per manufactured specifications.
10. Water heaters and furnaces may not be access through, or located in a bedroom or bathroom.
11. In warm air heating systems, an equal amount of air supply and return air shall be obtained.
12. Proper clearance from furnace or flue shall be maintained; i.e. 1 inch clearance for a double wall type "B" vent and a 6 inch clearance for single wall flue pipe.
13. Provide access for water heater, water softener, water meter and other equipment to permit replacement or repair.
14. Do not locate electrical panel in closets and provide 3 feet of clear floor space for electrical panel.
15. Minimum headroom 7'6" habitable areas 7'0" in hallways or bathroom
16. Full basement may require the addition of glazed openings to meet natural light and ventilation requirements.
17. Gas lines with mechanical joints must not be concealed in spaces. (All gas work requires a licensed contractor.)

REQUIRED INSPECTIONS:

1. Rough in plumbing (before fixtures are set) and rough in heating.
2. Rough in electrical before wires are covered. Contact the MN State Board of Electricity to schedule an inspection at 651-642-0800.
3. Framing and insulation after all framing, insulation and ductwork are in place and rough in electric and plumbing systems have been approved.
4. Final electric, plumbing and heating.
5. Final building after receiving all other finals.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To prevent possible condensation stains on basement ceiling, insulate outside faucet water supply lines.