

Residential Basement Finish

West Haven City

This information does not contain all the specific codes for construction and should be used only as a guide. The permittee is responsible to meet all code requirements applicable to each project.

PERMITS

A building permit is required to finish all single-family basements. The permit may also cover electrical, plumbing, and heating system modifications to existing or roughed-in systems. The Building Department staff can help you determine what is necessary to meet minimum safety requirements.

PLAN SUBMITTAL

- ☐ Floor plan with dimensions drawn to scale that show the layout of the entire basement. Label the use for all the rooms.
- ☐ Show electrical outlets, smoke detectors, lighting, fans, plumbing modifications, cleanouts, furnace, and water heater.
- ☐ List window sizes and types; identify emergency escape and rescue windows, and egress window wells with ladders and clear dimensions of window wells.
- ☐ Identify modifications to the existing structure such as posts, beams, and floor joists. Indicate height of dropped ceiling areas less than 7 feet.
- ☐ Show clearance around the tub and fixtures.
- ☐ You must show all work that is intended to be done, type of materials used, dimensions, and sizes, along with your application for a permit.
- ☐ You may draw the plans yourself; provide as much construction detail as you can.

TYPICAL CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR FINISHED BASEMENTS

- A hard-wired smoke detector with battery backup must be installed in all newly constructed areas of the basement. These detectors must be placed in each sleeping room and in the hallway serving the sleeping room(s). Smoke detectors must be installed in the remaining portions of the house in each sleeping room, hallways serving sleeping rooms, and on each floor level. These must be installed and be operational for the final inspection. Smoke detectors are required to be hard-wired and interconnected in new and existing bedrooms, halls, and on each level unless removal of interior wall or ceiling finishes would be required. In this case, battery operated devices would be acceptable. IRC R314.
- Carbon monoxide alarms are required in existing dwellings that have attached garages or have fuel-fired appliances. They shall be installed outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity

of the bedrooms. R315. Approved combination smoke- and carbon-monoxide detectors shall be permitted.

- An egress window with a clear opening of 5.7 sq. ft. and within 44" of the floor must be provided in the basement and in each bedroom. Check with the inspector for more details. IRC R310.1.
- Furnaces and water heaters cannot be located in a bedroom or bathroom unless appliances are installed in a dedicated enclosure in which all combustion air is taken directly from the outdoors, and a weather-stripped solid door equipped with an approved self-closing device is installed. If the furnace and water heater are being enclosed, adequate combustion air must be provided for these appliances to operate properly. For maintenance purposes, a minimum of 30 inches clear working space must be provided in front of furnaces and water heaters. Maintenance or removal of each appliance must be possible without removing the other or disturbing walls, piping, valves, wiring, and junction boxes.
- All rigid foam insulation must be covered with ½" gypsum board or an approved finish material. IRC R316.
- Habitable space shall not have a ceiling height of less than 7'0". Habitable rooms shall have a floor area of not less than 70 sq. ft. and not be less than 7' in any horizontal direction. IRC R304 and R305.
- All wood in direct contact with concrete or masonry is to be pressure-treated or wood of natural resistance to decay. Fasteners for treated wood shall be of hot-dipped zinc-coated galvanized steel, stainless steel, silicon bronze or copper. IRC R317.
- If using a paneling material less than ¼" thick, it must be applied over with gypsum. IRC R702.5.
- If finishing space under stairs for use as storage, or as closet space, must be sheet rocked with ½" gypsum board. IRC
- Bathrooms that do not have a window that can be opened must have mechanical ventilation vented to the outside. A ventilation fan is required in toilet rooms and bathrooms with unopenable windows. The fan must be vented to the exterior of the building and not to terminate within 3 feet of an opening. IRC R303.3. Toilets must have a minimum of 21 inches in front of the toilet and 15 inches from the center of the toilet and any sidewall or other obstruction. Showers shall have a minimum inside dimension of 900 square inches, capable of encompassing a 30 inch circle and be finished 72 inches above the floor with non-absorbent material. IRC R307.
- Fiber-cement, fiber-mat cement, and glass mat gypsum shall be used as backers for wall tile in the tub and shower areas and wall panels in shower areas. IRC R702.4.2.
- All new concealed gas piping must be air tested at 25# for 12 hours. IFGC 406.4.
- All electrical, plumbing, and heating work must be installed in accordance with appropriate State Codes.
- Lighting and ventilation are required for any finished portion of the basement.
- Every room, except closets, bathrooms, and utility rooms should have a warm air supply and return air register. Mechanical Code Section 918.

FINISHING BASEMENT INSPECTIONS REQUIRED BY LAW

It is the responsibility of the permit holder to call for the final inspection when all devices and fixtures have been installed, and wiring is completed including cover plates. Work shall not be covered or concealed before the inspection is made and the work approved.

1. Rough 4-way – When the wiring, plumbing and sub-grade plumbing, heating are installed, and the framing is complete. The following inspections are generally done as part of the rough 4-way:

- a. Power to panel – Electrical meter is placed and ready to be hooked-up.
- b. Gas line pressure test.
- c. Framing Inspection – When all roof, walls, floor framing, fire-stopping, bracing, and exterior nailing (separate inspection for nailing is acceptable) are complete.
- d. Electrical Inspection – Rough wiring, before any part of the work is concealed. i. See Wiring & Inspection information below.
- e. Plumbing Inspection – Rough plumbing, before any part of the work is concealed.
- f. Heating & Refrigeration Inspection – Rough heating and refrigeration, before any part of the work is concealed.

2. Re-inspections, as required.

3. Insulation & Vapor Barrier, as required. 4. Final Inspection – When all framing, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical work is complete, but prior to final occupancy of the building. This includes decks, guards, handrails, exterior site work, etc.

WIRING & IMPORTANT INSPECTION INFORMATION – This inspection must be done before any wiring is covered by insulation, sheetrock, paneling, etc. Underground wiring must be inspected before the trench is covered.

- At all boxes, there must be minimum wire length of 6" including the grounding conductors.
- The outer cable jacket must extend at least ¼" into the box.
- All splicing of ground wires and other wires must be completed with approved splicing devices when calling for inspection.
- In receptacle boxes with more than one cable in the box, the ground wires must be spliced with a wire tail to be attached to the ground screw on the receptacle, as only one conductor is permitted under a terminal screw.
- All metal boxes and equipment must be grounded.
- The volume of boxes must be sufficient for the number of conductors and other items contained in the box. (See NEC 314-16 for box sizing.)

- Do not install junction boxes in attic or conceal them in walls.
- All junctions and splices should be made in boxes that are used for fixtures, switches, or receptacles. If a regular box is too small, use a larger volume box. (See NEC 314.16)
- Plastic cable must be stapled at intervals not exceeding 4 ½', and within 8" of plastic boxes.
- Plastic cable must not be installed with 1 ¼" of the face of studs, joists, strips, or any framing members. This applies to cables installed through bored holes or cables strapped to the sides of studs or strips. Cables closer than 1 ¼" must be protected with metal plates or sleeve a minimum of 1/16" thick.
- Outlet boxes may not be used as sole support of ceiling fans. Special approved fan boxes should be used for support of ceiling fans.
- Ground fault circuit interrupters must be used for receptacles located in bathrooms, garages, outside locations, within 6' of kitchen or bar type sinks, and unfinished areas of basements. (See NEC 210-8 for further details of GFI protection requirements.)
- Recessed lighting fixtures installed in insulated areas must be IC rated. All recessed lighting fixtures must be installed as per the manufacturer's instructions. (Some are not approved for wiring with plastic cables.) All electrical equipment must be listed and labeled by a testing laboratory recognized by the 2014 National Electrical Code (NEC). The above information covers common mistakes made by homeowners doing their own wiring. Additional information and knowledge will be needed to install the wiring properly. Wiring by owners must comply with the same standards as required of Electrical Contractors. State law prohibits planning, laying out, or doing electrical work by anyone other than the resident owner or a State of Utah Licensed Electrical Contractor.