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Finishing an Existing Basement 1 & 2 Family Dwellings

2020 MN Residential Code

Minimum Finished Ceiling Height, Existing Basements:

- **R305.2 -** The finished ceiling height shall be a minimum 6'- 4", including beams, girders, ducts, or other obstructions.
- **R305.2.2 -** A minimum 6'- 4" headroom is required in all parts of the stairway**.**
- **R305.2.1.1 -** Bathrooms shall have a minimum 6'- 4" headroom at the center of the required clearance areas for tubs, showers, vanities and water closets.

Bedrooms:

- **The finished ceiling height requirements apply, see section above**
- **R304.1 and 304.2 -** Minimum floor area of 70 square feet, with a minimum of 7' length in any horizontal dimension.
- **R310.1 -** Minimum one operable emergency escape and rescue opening (See Egress Window Handout).
- **R314.3 -** Smoke detectors are required within each bedroom as well as outside of each bedroom in the immediate vicinity.
    - **R314.4 -** Smoke detectors shall be hardwired and interconnected with battery backup.
- **R315.1 - R315.3 -** Carbon Monoxide detectors are required outside and not more than 10 feet from each bedroom.
- **R303.10 -** There must be a permanent heat source capable of safely maintaining a temperature of 68° F in the room.
- **2020 MN Fuel & Gas Code, Section 303.1 -** Fuel burning appliances shall not be located in or obtain combustion air from (have a door directly leading to) a bedroom or bathroom unless one of the following are true:
    - Appliance(s) are direct-vent and obtain all combustion air from the outdoors
    - Appliance(s) are solid fuel-fired and the room is not a confined space and the building is not of unusually tight construction
    - Appliance(s) are located in a dedicated enclosure in which all combustion air is taken directly from the outdoors and access to such enclosure shall be through a solid weather-stripped door equipped with a self-closing device.

- **2020 MN Residential Energy Code, MN Rules 1322.0100, Subp. 3.A., Exception #9 -** Existing home foundations built prior to June 2009 are exempt from the MN Energy Code regulations. Applicant may choose the insulation type if any, and simply follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Fire Protection:

- **R302.7 –** Enclosed accessible space under stairs shall have walls, under-stair surface, and any soffits protected on the enclosed side with minimum ½ gypsum board.

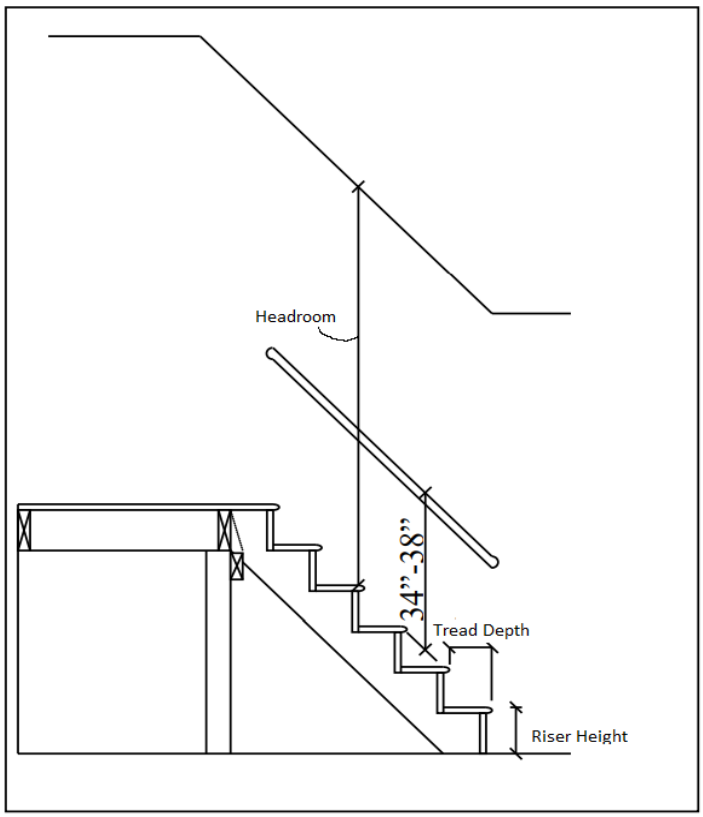
- **R302.11 -** Fireblocking is required to cut off concealed vertical and horizontal draft spaces

Building Permit and Plan Review for Finishing Existing Basements:

- **All basement finish projects will need a plan submitted to Plan Review before a building permit will be issued. The plan must include the basement layout, with dimensions and rooms labeled (see example on next page). For legalizing a basement bedroom, the following measurements must be included along with the floorplan for Plan Review staff to assess before a building permit will be issued:**

    1. General basement finished ceiling height / headroom clearance: _____

    2. Lowest headroom clearance in pathway down the stairs and to and within the bedroom (includes things like ducts, beams, soffits, etc. that one must walk under to get to and that are within the bedroom): _____



3. Headroom at bottom of stairs: _____

4.Stair width (wall to wall): _____

5.Stair Tread Depth: _____

6.Stair Riser Height: _____

7.Difference between
tallest and shortest riser: _____

Basement floor plan example:

General finished ceiling height: _____
Headroom (finished) at bottom of stairs: _____
Headroom (finished) under lowest soffit: _____
Headroom (finished) under structural beam: _____

Stair width: _____
Stair riser height: _____
Stair tread depth: _____
Difference between shortest and tallest riser: _____