

# RESIDENTIAL REMODELING AND BASEMENT FINISH



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CITY OF HUTCHINSON BUILDING DEPARTMENT  
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Phone: (320) 234-4216 Web Site [www.ci.hutchinson.mn.us/building.htm](http://www.ci.hutchinson.mn.us/building.htm)

This handout is designed to be used as a reference for the homeowner who is undertaking a home remodeling or basement finish project. Addressed below are some of the building code requirements most commonly encountered in remodeling.

## **REQUIRED INFORMATION WHEN APPLYING FOR A REMODELING PERMIT**

1. Completed Building Permit Application. Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical and Excavation permits may also be required depending on the extent of work being done.
2. Two sets of drawings, with room dimensions and use of room I.E. *Bedroom Den etc.*
3. If any contractors are being hired to remodel your house, they may be required to be licensed and/or bonded. Check with the Hutchinson Building Department for a list of licensed contractors. This is for your protection.
4. The cost of your building permit will be based on the valuation of the work being done.

## **BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS**

- All permits and copies of your approved plans will need to be available for reference at the time of inspection.
- In order to help create and maintain safe dwellings, any time a remodeling project requires a permit, smoke alarms must be installed in locations as required for new housing. This means a smoke alarm must be installed in each bedroom, in the hallway serving the bedrooms, and on each floor of the house. If interior wall finish materials are removed or new wiring is being installed, the new smoke alarms are required to be hardwired and provided with a battery back up. If no new wiring is being installed, the new smoke alarms may be battery operated.
- A landing is required at the bottom of every stairway. This landing shall be at least as wide as the stairs and a minimum 36" measured in the direction of travel.
- Doors separating the house from an attached garage are required to be a minimum 1-3/8" thick solid wood, solid steel, honeycomb core steel, or a minimum 20 minute fire-rated door. This is required to provide protection to the people in the house from the possible fire hazard of vehicle or fuel storage often present in garages.
- All bedrooms and any basements with habitable space, including family rooms, hobby rooms, game rooms, etc., are required to have at least one egress window to provide an additional path of emergency escape and rescue. At least one of the dimensions of the window will be greater than the minimum dimensions shown in the attached illustrations, to provide the minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet.

- When selecting a window, the square footage can be verified by multiplying the width by the height of the opening, in inches, and dividing by 144. If you are dealing with a sales associate, remember to let the associate know you are looking for an egress window.
- Any room that is being converted into a bedroom must have at least one egress window installed, even if there is an existing window that is smaller than the required size. The sill of an egress window is not allowed to be more than 44 inches above the finished floor.
- To provide safe travel up and down in stairways, riser heights may not be more than 7 ¾” inches and tread depths may not be less than 10 inches. The riser heights and tread depths are not allowed to vary more than 3/8” respectively from the smallest to the largest, to help eliminate a tripping hazard.
- Any stairway having 4 or more risers is required to have a handrail on at least one side. The top of the handrail is to be 34 to 38 inches vertically above the plane of the stair treads. Handrails need to be continuous from the bottom riser to the top riser and then returned either to the wall or a newel post. A space of at least 1-1/2 inches must be provided between the handrail and the adjacent wall. Handrails on stairways must be between 1-1/4 inches and 2-5/8 inches in diameter, to ensure the handrail is comfortably graspable.
- Where an elevated open floor surface more than 30 inches high is created, such as an open stairway, an open landing overlooking a room below, etc., a guardrail is required for protection against falls. The guardrail must be at least 36 inches high and may have vertical openings only that will not allow a 4 inch circle to pass through them.

Always feel free to call the building department as questions arise. We are here to help.

## **REQUIRED INSPECTIONS**

Following is the list of the required inspections. The order may vary depending on your project.

### Plumbing:

An Underground plumbing inspection is required for new plumbing materials installed beneath the basement floor or floor of the lowest level.

A Rough-in plumbing inspection is required if new plumbing water lines, waste, or venting are being installed. Both the underground and rough-in inspections require a 5-pound air test.

### Mechanical-Fireplace:

Mechanical inspections are done to help ensure the living space being created will be comfortable. Heating and cooling supply and return ductwork will be inspected as well as exhaust fans in bathrooms and clearances for fireplaces and flue pipes. If a new gas fired appliance or gas piping is being installed, an inspection and air test are required to check for leaks and ensure valves and exhausts are installed properly. A gas line air test requires 25-pounds of air pressure for 30 minutes.

### Electrical Rough-in:

By a State Electrical Inspector

Framing:

The framing inspection is done after the electrical, mechanical, and plumbing rough-in inspections are completed. The mechanical work can be inspected at the same time as framing if ready. We will be checking to verify that treated lumber, fire-stopping, draft-stopping, and bracing are installed where they are required. This is a good time to verify that all the communication wiring you want installed is in place.

Insulation:

When the insulation and vapor barrier are in place and sealed.

Electrical Final:

By a State Electrical Inspector.

Final:

The final inspection is to be completed when all of the permitted work is complete and prior to occupancy.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

***I want to take out a wall between my kitchen and living room, is that ok?*** If you have any uncertainty about the structural necessity of a wall, please contact the City Building Dept. to schedule a consultation with one of our inspectors.

***What will it cost me to have the City inspector come out for a consultation?*** There is no charge for a preconstruction consultation. There is no charge for consultation after a permit has been issued either. We want to emphasize that we are more interested in building safety than collecting fees. **If you have a question, feel free to ask!**

***Can I turn my unused attic space into another bedroom?*** It is very likely you can. A consultation would again be recommended to discuss insulation, headroom, and egress window concerns.

***If I am remodeling my upstairs bedroom and my stairway doesn't comply with the code, do I have to tear it out and reconfigure it?*** Possibly. An existing staircase may not have to be replaced simply because another portion of the house is being remodeled. However, a compliant handrail is required to be installed.

***Do I need a plumbing permit if I am remodeling my bathroom?*** Yes. This permit is required to verify the new plumbing fixtures are installed correctly and sealed to help prevent any possible moisture damage problems.

***Can I convert my garage into a living space?*** Possibly. City ordinance requires a garage space of at least 400 square feet. If you are going to maintain at least this much space or have a second garage, this may be a possibility.

***Do I need to get a permit if I am just remodeling my kitchen?*** Yes. Often times kitchen remodeling projects involve much more than just cabinet replacement. Replacing plumbing fixtures and possibly opening stud wall cavities for other changes require issuing a permit.