



City of Twin Falls
Building Department
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Basement Remodels & Egress Windows

1. Finishing a bedroom or other room in a basement requires a building permit and an electrical permit at a minimum. To determine the building permit cost, a reasonable estimate of the cost of construction is needed, labor and material. If the homeowner is doing the work, we need an estimated cost of material, and we will make an adjustment for labor.
2. Please provide a scaled drawing of the basement area. ($\frac{1}{4}$ " or $\frac{1}{2}$ " per foot, drawn with a ruler on graph paper or computer aided) It should show the entire basement outline and identify the hall, laundry area, bathroom(s), bedroom(s), furnace and water heater areas (existing and proposed). Even if the drawing is to scale, please provide dimensions of the spaces. If necessary, provide a separate drawing of smaller spaces, at a larger scale, so any specific details may be noted. Habitable space in an existing basement is required to have a minimum *finished* ceiling height of 80" (6'-8")*. If the ceiling height is less than 80 inches, the space can still be finished and used, but it is not considered habitable space and any sleeping rooms are not considered legal bedrooms.
**6'-8" ceiling height allowed as an alternative means and method per IRC appendix J.*
3. All bedrooms require an egress window or a door directly to the outside from that sleeping room. Unless the City of Twin Falls has a record (i.e., a permit issued specifically for a bedroom) of a basement bedroom, it is not a legal bedroom unless it has an egress window or door opening directly to the outside. The egress window sill cannot be more than 44 inches above the finished floor. The window, in the open position, must have an opening a minimum 20 inches wide and 24 inches high. But, that opening must be at least 5.0 square feet. Basically a 4 X 4 sliding window, a single hung window must at least 3 feet wide and 5 feet tall or a 30"x42" casement will meet egress. You will also need a window well that is 9 square feet minimum and 3 feet in depth. If the vertical egress out of the window well is greater than 44", a permanently affixed ladder will be required. The window well is to be 3' in depth minimum measured from the foundation wall outward, and 9 square feet overall.
4. If you are cutting a new hole for the egress window or widening the existing opening, a header will be required at the top of the new opening. (2)2x8's for up to 6' or (2)2x6's up to 3' is typical. In addition, all lumber that touches the concrete opening is to be preservative treated.
5. All exposed concrete walls are required to be insulated when creating a **NEW** bedroom. *Please check with the County appraisal department if the room is currently recognized as a bedroom on your appraisal.* The IECC requires a minimum R-19 insulation on the exterior walls. We recommend building a 2 X 6 wall with a treated bottom plate and pull the wall out from the concrete about an inch so the R-19 Batt insulation can be installed. This wall is a non-bearing

wall and usually only holds up the insulation, wiring and drywall so the studs can be 24 inches on center.

6. All new wiring in a **NEW** bedroom is required to be arc-fault protected. An outlet is required within 6 feet of a door opening and then a maximum 12 feet apart. Any section of wall that is 2 feet or wider does require an outlet. It is suggested that you place an outlet within a couple of feet of the corners of the room to make sure the only outlet on that wall does not wind up behind the headboard of the bed. (Outlets are easy to install and relatively cheap before the drywall is installed.) Outlet spacing is the same as in a bedroom for all other habitable spaces.

7. When a new bedroom is created in the basement, or when there is an addition, the IRC requires line voltage smoke detectors with a battery backup be installed in each bedroom, outside the bedroom areas and at least 1 smoke detector on each floor level. The smoke detectors outside the bedroom areas can be used as the smoke detectors on that floor level. The smoke detectors are to be interconnected so if one is activated, all will sound.

8. Hardwired interconnection of smoke detectors shall not be required where listed wireless alarms are installed and the alarms sound upon activation of one alarm.

Note: Areas not accessible for hardwiring of smoke detectors would still require battery operated smoke detectors installed in each bedroom, outside bedroom areas and at least one smoke detector on each floor level.

Carbon monoxide alarms are also required when there is an attached garage or where fuel fired appliances exist.

*****See our egress window brochure for additional information and our residential remodel permit application for plan submittal requirements.*****