



# INSPECTION SERVICES DIVISION



[www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPW/Municipal-Agreement-Mission-Statement](http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPW/Municipal-Agreement-Mission-Statement)

Specific to the Burlington City Code of Ordinances – Chapter 8 and current adopted Vermont Fire and Building Safety Codes and Standards

## CODE COMPLIANCE INFORMATION SHEET

# Converting Attics & Cellars into Habitable

All construction documents adopted and applied in the City of Burlington are adopted directly through legislative process in the State of Vermont. The State of Vermont Fire & Building Safety Code adopts and amends the model codes to fit Vermont's needs. Burlington adopts this document and applies the same.

### PERMITS REQUIREMENTS

- A) Zoning Permits (land use based) are required for converting/changing use and adding new living space. Please contact the Department of Planning & Zoning directly at (802) 865-7188 or visit their web site: <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/PZ>.
- B) Construction Permits Required (Life Safety & Structural base codes & standards) that include, but are not limited to: building, electrical, plumbing, heating and, may also require, fire alarm & sprinkler. Structures that are four stories in height, per definition of the codes, automatically require sprinkler systems. Please contact DPW/ISD Customer Service directly at (802) 863-9094 X3 or visit the department web site: <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPW/Municipal-Agreement-Mission-Statement>

### MINIMUM LIFE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ **Ceiling Heights:** new construction finish ceiling heights in all habitable spaces requires a minimum of 7 ft. 6 in. for 2/3rds of the area being occupied (existing structures must be a minimum of 7 ft. ceiling height).
- ❖ **Emergency Escape:** second means of egress out of every living and sleeping area requires: one door leading to directly to the outside or an emergency escape window that requires a 5.7 sq. ft. net clearance opening and not more than 44 in. off the finish floor and must be less than 20 ft. off exterior grade.
- ❖ **Four Story structures:** defined as stories, habitable attics, and cellars adds height & travel distance for occupants to escape out of and additional areas to search for rescue. Four story structures and more requires sprinkler systems to be installed.
- ❖ **Natural light or Ventilation:** 8% of floor area served, which, can be operable windows. 4% light + 4% natural ventilation OR mechanical.

- ❖ **Interconnected smoke and co detection:** required installation as required.

## STAIRS

[http://firesafety.vermont.gov/sites/firesafety/files/files/Documents/dfs\\_codesheet\\_stairs.pdf](http://firesafety.vermont.gov/sites/firesafety/files/files/Documents/dfs_codesheet_stairs.pdf)

- ❖ **Winder style:** winders have specific design criteria. Please consult with the Code Consultant (a City Building Inspector) to confirm design and compliance.
- ❖ **Standard Stair Rise & Run:** one and two Family – 7.75 in. maximum rise and 10 in. minimum tread.
- ❖ **All other rise and run:** 7 in. maximum rise and 11 in. minimum tread.
- ❖ **Headroom:** clear headroom must **measure of 6 ft. 8 in.** (6'-8") at all points measured vertically off the toe of the tread.
- ❖ **Handrails:** 34-38 in. measured vertically off the toe of the tread on each side continuous.
- ❖ Minimum stair width shall be 36 in.

[http://firesafety.vermont.gov/sites/firesafety/files/files/Documents/dfs\\_codesheet\\_handrail\\_guards.pdf](http://firesafety.vermont.gov/sites/firesafety/files/files/Documents/dfs_codesheet_handrail_guards.pdf)

- ❖ All exterior stairs need to be covered or constructed with materials to prevent accumulation of snow & ice.

## Cellar Bathrooms

- ❖ Ceiling height of 7 ft. (bathroom is not a living or sleeping environment).
- ❖ One – 3 sq. ft. operable window to the exterior is required for ventilation or mechanical is required.
- ❖ Back water valve needs to be part of the plumbing system at a minimum under a required Plumbing Permit. This device prevents public sewer from backing up and into your home through the lowest fixture in the cellar. Plumbing permits are required.
- ❖ Fixtures must

## Cellar Furnace/Boiler Rooms

- ❖ Furnace and Boiler heating units must be separate from living space. Please consult with the Code official on the requirements for space in and around the unit as well as the need for make-up air.

## ADOPTED CODES AND STANDARDS CODES

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPW/Construction-Permits/Adopted-Codes>

All codes change approximately every three to four years through the State Legislative adoption process. being replaced with current editions.

## CLOSING OUT YOUR PERMIT(S)

All construction permits issued by this department and Zoning requires intermediate and final inspections. These approved inspections close building construction, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical work need permits, inspections by the trade's inspector, and all work must be installed to today's codes and standards. Certificate of Occupancy's for both Building and Zoning are required as a result of an approved final inspection