



## DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BUILDING INSPECTIONS

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### EGRESS WINDOW REQUIREMENTS

- Q: If a newly constructed basement is being used for only storage and utilities, is an egress window required? UBC SECTIONS 103, 1204, 3303
- A: YES, the UBC does not differentiate between basements being used for one purpose or another. Section 1204 is a specific requirement for R Occupancies. Section 3303 (a) has been generalized by some building officials to provide for exception; however, that section is a general requirements and is superseded by the specific. (See UBC Section 103)
- Q: Is basement egress window required to be installed when finishing an existing basement?
- A: If the basement was previously and lawfully (in your best judgement) constructed as "Habitable Space" and is being remodeled or finished and a bedroom is not being created, then a basement egress window will not be required to be installed. However, if the basement was not used as storage and utility space or similar uses and the remodeling will convert non-habitable space to habitable, then the basement must meet all provisions of the code for habitable space and a basement egress window must be installed. Needless to say, if a bedroom is newly created all provisions for habitable space and egress must apply. NOTE: Section 106 may be applied only with the approval of the Building Official. (Ref. UBC 409, UBC Chapter 12)
- Q: If an existing basement egress window was lawfully constructed with a sill height of 48" would you allow this sill height to qualify as meeting code upon basement remodeling or a construction of new basement bedroom? UBC SECTION 104 (c)
- A: The sill height of 48" is not considered to be "dangerous to life" and should be allowed to remain in place.
- Q: If a newly constructed egress window is constructed with a sill height exceeding 44" may a step or landing be installed to meet this requirement?
- A: On a newly constructed dwelling this is a very controversial in that there is no excuse for non-compliance. The building official must use judgement in this case.
- Q: What kind of structure must be provided as a "window well" for basement egress windows?
- A: The window must be openable to the full clear opening of 5.7 square feet required and the window well must maintain that full clear opening to provide a route of escape to or rescue from a public street, public alley, yard or exit court.
- Q: What are the window well requirements? UBC SECTION 310.4 - Emergency Escapes
- A: Requirements have been added to the code for window wells, which are required when an emergency escape or rescue window is installed below grade. Window wells with a vertical depth of more than 44" must be equipped with an approved ladder or stair. This provision does not require the stair to comply with Chapter 10.