

# RESIDENTIAL CODE TIPS:

## FRAMING

All framing shall meet the currently used version of the International Residential Code.

## EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE OPENINGS

R310.1 Emergency escape and rescue required. Basements, habitable attics and every sleeping room shall have at least one operable emergency escape and rescue opening. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency egress and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room. Where emergency escape and rescue openings are provided they shall have a sill height of not more than 44 inches (1118 mm) above the floor. Where a door opening having a threshold below the adjacent ground elevation serves as an emergency escape and rescue opening and is provided with a bulkhead enclosure, the bulkhead enclosure shall comply with Section R310.3. The net clear opening dimensions required by this section shall be obtained by the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening from the inside. Emergency escape and rescue openings with a finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation shall be provided with a window well in accordance with Section R310.2. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall open directly into a public way, or to a yard or court that opens to a public way.

## STAIRWAYS & STEPS

R311.7.1 Width. Stairways shall not be less than 36 inches (914 mm) in clear width at all points above the permitted handrail height and below the required headroom height. Handrails shall not project more than 4.5 inches (114 mm) on either side of the stairway and the minimum clear width of the stairway at and below the handrail height, including treads and landings, shall not be less than 31½ inches (787 mm) where a handrail is installed on one side and 27 inches (698 mm) where handrails are provided on both sides.

Exception: The width of spiral stairways shall be in accordance with Section R311.7.9.1.

R311.7.2 Headroom. The minimum headroom in all parts of the stairway shall not be less than 6 feet 8 inches (2032 mm) measured vertically from the sloped line adjoining the tread nosing or from the floor surface of the landing or platform on that portion of the stairway.

R311.7.4 Stair treads and risers. Stair treads and risers shall meet the requirements of this section. For the purposes of this section all dimensions and dimensioned surfaces shall be exclusive of carpets, rugs or runners.

R311.7.4.1 Riser height. The maximum riser height shall be 8 1/4 inches. The riser shall be measured vertically between leading edges of the adjacent treads. The greatest riser height within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8 inch (9.5 mm).

R311.7.4.2 Tread depth. The minimum tread depth shall be 9 inches. The tread depth shall be measured horizontally between the vertical planes of the foremost projection of adjacent treads and at a right angle to the tread's leading edge.

## RAILINGS / GUARDS

R312.1 Where required. Guards shall be located along open-sided walking surfaces, including stairs, ramps and landings, that are located more than 30 inches (762 mm) measured vertically to the floor or grade below at any point within 36 inches (914 mm) horizontally to the edge of the open side. Insect screening shall not be considered as a guard. R312.2 Height. Required guards at open-sided walking surfaces, including stairs, porches, balconies or landings, shall be not less than 36 inches (914 mm) high measured vertically above the adjacent walking surface, adjacent fixed seating or the line connecting the leading edges of the treads.

## SMOKE ALARMS

R314.3 Location. Smoke alarms shall be installed in the following locations:

1. In each sleeping room.
2. Outside each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms.
3. On each additional story of the dwelling, including basements and habitable attics but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. In dwellings or dwelling units with split levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level shall suffice for the adjacent lower level provided that the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level. When more than one smoke alarm is required to be installed within an individual dwelling unit the alarm devices shall be interconnected in such a manner that the actuation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the individual unit.

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R314.4 Power source. Smoke alarms shall receive their primary power from the building wiring when such wiring is served from a commercial source, and when primary power is interrupted, shall receive power from a battery. Wiring shall be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than those required for overcurrent protection. Smoke alarms shall be interconnected.

### CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

R315.1 Carbon monoxide alarms. For new construction, an approved carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms in dwelling units within which fuel-fired appliances are installed and in dwelling units that have attached garages.

### ARC FAULT CIRCUIT BREAKERS

E3902.11 Arc-fault circuit-interrupter protection. All branch circuits that supply 120-volt, single-phase, 15- and 20-ampere outlets installed in family rooms, dining rooms, living rooms, parlors, libraries, dens, bedrooms, sunrooms, recreation rooms, closets, hallways and similar rooms or areas shall be protected by a combination type arc-fault circuit interrupter installed to provide protection of the branch circuit.

### TAMPER RESISTANT RECEPTACLES

E4002.14 Tamper-resistant receptacles. In areas specified in Section E3901.1, 125-volt, 15- and 20-ampere receptacles shall be listed tamper-resistant receptacles.

### INSULATION:

Must meet the requirements of the International Energy Conservation Code or the PA Alternative Residential Energy Provisions 2009. This can be found at:

<http://www.engr.psu.edu/phrc/Publications/PA%20-Alternative%202009.pdf>