

BUILDING CODE INFORMATION
Over-the-counter Permit for Single-Family Remodel

Updated 8/1/16

2015 International Residential Code (IRC) Requirements

Listed below are some of the most commonly identified code issues that occur in over-the-counter permitted construction. More detailed information on code requirements can be found in the [Tip Sheets](#) located under the resources tab at www.MyBuildingPermit.com. **Since you are responsible for correcting any nonconforming work, it is important that you take the time to read about code requirements and arrange for a preconstruction meeting with a building inspector before beginning construction. Use building inspection code 200 to schedule the Preconstruction Meeting.**

Ventilation and Natural Light:

Exhaust fans which are vented to the exterior of the building must be provided in all remodeled or newly constructed laundry areas (min. 50 cfm), bathrooms (min. 50 cfm), and kitchens (100 cfm). [IRC M1507.4]

Habitable rooms (not including bathrooms, closets, hallways, or storage areas) must be provided with natural light by glazed openings not less than 8% of the floor area. [IRC R303.1] Ventilation for habitable rooms must be provided per IRC section M1507.

Safety Glazing: See *MyBuildingPermit.com Tip Sheet 19* for more information.

Glazing adjacent to doors is required in the following locations if the bottom edge of the glazing is less than 60 inches above the walking surface: Within 24 inches of either side of the door if glazing is in the same plane as the door, or if glazing is in a wall perpendicular to the door within 24 inches on the hinge side of an inswing door. [IRC R308.4.2]

Glazing within 36" of the walking surface horizontally and less than 36" above the walking surface of stairs and ramps is required to be safety glazing. [IRC R308.4.6]

Sleeping Areas:

All sleeping rooms must have an emergency egress window or door that leads directly to a yard or public way [IRC R310.1]. Emergency egress windows must provide: See *Tip Sheet 10* for more information.

- Minimum clear openable area of 5.7 sq ft, height of 24" min, and width of 20" min.
- Maximum finished sill height 44" above the floor.

No openings are allowed between a sleeping room and a garage [IRC R302.5.1].

A smoke alarm must be located in every sleeping room and a smoke alarm and a carbon monoxide alarm must be located outside of and in the immediate vicinity of each sleeping area [IRC R314 & R315]. See *Tip Sheet 4* for more information.

Stairways and Handrails: See *Tip Sheet 1* and *Tip Sheet 2* for more information.

Dimensional requirements for stairways are: [IRC R311.7]

- Maximum riser height of 7¾" and minimum tread depth of 10" with a minimum 36" stair width.
- Minimum headroom clearance of 6' 8".
- Graspable handrails 34" to 38" above the tread nosing with a cross sectional dimension of 1¼" to 2".
- Handrail ends to be returned to the wall or end in newel posts or safety terminals.

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Guardrails: See *Tip Sheet 3* for more information.

Guardrails are required at decks or any open-sided walking surfaces that are more than 30" above grade at any point within 36" horizontally from the open edge [IRC R312.1]. Guardrails must be:

- Minimum of 36" in height
- Rails to be spaced so that a 4" diameter sphere cannot pass through.

Washington State Energy Code:

Walls, ceilings, and floors of heated spaces must be properly insulated and glazed to minimize heat loss. Exterior walls, ceilings with unheated space above, and concrete slab edges must be insulated. All new glazing must be double-paned glass with a minimum U-value based on the energy design option chosen. Call the Building Plans Examiner on duty in Development Services (425-452-4121) for requirements specific to your project. See the [WSU Energy Program website](#) for more details about energy efficiency.

Water Closets:

Water closets (toilets) must be located in a space with a minimum clearance of 15" on each side from the centerline of the fixture, and must have a minimum 21" clear space in front of the fixture [IRC R307.1].

Newly installed water closets must be designed to conform to the requirements of the Washington State Water Conservation Act.

Pressure-Treated Lumber: [IRC R317]

Wood placed in contact with concrete must be pressure-treated or naturally durable lumber.

All wood used to construct exterior decks must be pressure-treated or naturally durable lumber.

Water Heaters: See *Tip Sheet 7* for more information.

Water heaters and other appliances designed to be in a fixed position must be provided with seismic straps. Straps must be a minimum on $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide and made of at least 22 gauge metal. There must be one strap in the upper and lower 1/3 of the tank height, with a minimum 4" clearance above the controls [IRC M1307.2].

Water heaters and other appliances in a garage must be raised so that the source of ignition is a minimum of 18" above the floor unless the appliance is listed as flammable vapor ignition resistant [IRC M1307.3].

Water heaters and other appliances installed in a location subject to vehicle damage must be protected by an approved barrier [IRC M1307.3.1].

THIS INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT is not intended to address every code requirement that may arise with your project. All new construction must apply with current building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, energy, and indoor air quality codes. **Remember to arrange a preconstruction meeting with a building inspector by calling the inspection request line, 425-452-6875.**

If you have further questions about current building codes or project-specific code questions, please call or visit the building plans examiner on duty in the Permit Center (425-452-4121) between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays (Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).