



Department of Land Use

FAQ

(Frequently Asked Questions)

What is required to convert my unfinished basement to habitable space?

1. To convert an unfinished basement to habitable space, at least one emergency escape and rescue window or exterior door must be included in all required submissions for permits. Additional means of egress may be needed in applications including sleeping rooms, as per requirements of the 2006 International Residential Code, Section R310. Habitable space is defined as a space for living, sleeping, eating or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces are not considered habitable spaces.
2. To paint existing block or concrete walls and install carpeting, no permit is required.
3. When new walls or partitions are framed (including perimeter walls), a permit will be required. The drawings to be submitted must include a typical wall section depicting framing, any vapor barrier, insulation, and final finishes. Any ceiling finishes must also be noted.
4. The drawings must show all existing and proposed mechanical systems and clearances from the systems. A Mechanical Permit will be required for any changes to the HVAC system.

The FAQ series only summarizes or highlights portions of the New Castle County Code. In all applications, the New Castle County Code must be consulted. The language in the Code prevails over the FAQ.

3/21/02
Amended 01/05/05, 12/17/08