

### **R104.1 General.**

The *building official* is hereby authorized and directed to enforce the provisions of this code. **The *building official* shall have the authority to render interpretations of this code** and to adopt policies and procedures in order to clarify the application of its provisions. Such interpretations, policies and procedures shall be in compliance with the intent and purpose of this code. Such policies and procedures shall not have the effect of waiving requirements specifically provided for in this code.

### **Building Official Interpretation – Unfinished Basements**

For the purposes of permit issuance and inspection, an unfinished basement shall be considered a non-habitable area intended solely for storage, building service equipment, and utility functions. An unfinished basement shall not contain features that establish or define future habitable rooms.

The following provisions shall apply:

#### **1. Wall Framing**

- Framing shall be limited to load-bearing walls required for structural support.
- Non-load-bearing partition walls shall not be installed except as necessary to enclose mechanical or electrical equipment, or to create plumbing, mechanical, or utility chases.
- Framing that establishes, delineates, or otherwise creates future bedrooms, bathrooms, family rooms, recreation rooms, offices, closets, hallways, or other habitable spaces is not permitted.

#### **2. Perimeter Walls**

- Exterior foundation walls may be furred or framed to allow installation of insulation.

#### **3. ICF Foundations**

- Where insulated concrete form (ICF) foundation walls are utilized, gypsum wallboard may be installed as required to provide the prescribed thermal barrier.
- Electrical wiring may be installed within exterior wall assemblies prior to the installation of gypsum wallboard.

#### **4. Mechanical and Utility Rooms**

- Mechanical, electrical, and utility rooms may be framed and finished as necessary for the installation and protection of equipment.
- Required clearances for equipment installation, operation, and maintenance shall be maintained.
- Supply air ducts or heat runs may be installed to condition the basement; however, conditioning of an unfinished basement is not required unless otherwise required by the adopted code.

#### **5. Plumbing Rough-Ins**

- Underground sanitary drainage, vent piping, and water service piping intended for future basement fixtures may be installed below the basement slab.
- Plumbing fixtures, fixture drains above the slab, fixture vents, water distribution piping serving future fixtures, and fixture connections shall not be installed or roughed-in within the unfinished basement.
- The installation of underground plumbing for future use shall not be construed as authorization to create bathrooms, kitchens, wet bars, laundry areas, or other habitable or occupied spaces.
- Any future installation of plumbing fixtures or above-slab plumbing systems shall require permits and inspections as required by the adopted code.

#### **6. Electrical Rough-Ins**

- Electrical wiring may be installed within perimeter wall framing.
- Lights shall be allowed in the storage area.
- Required smoke alarms shall be installed in accordance with the adopted code.
- Electrical boxes installed for future use on these walls shall be provided with approved covers at the time of final inspection.

#### **7. Code Compliance**

- Any framing installed within an unfinished basement shall comply with applicable requirements for fire blocking, draft stopping, structural design, and other provisions of the code.
- Future finishing of the basement beyond the scope of this interpretation shall require permits and inspections as required by the adopted code.