



CITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

Code Memorandum

To: Department of Buildings Plan Reviewers, Project Managers, Project Administrators and Inspectors

From: Judith Frydland
Commissioner 

Date: February 7, 2017

RE: **Natural Light and Ventilation Requirements for Basements in Existing Residential Buildings.**

For existing single family residences and duplexed dwelling units in existing buildings where at least 40% of the net floor area of the dwelling unit is entirely above grade, natural light and ventilation requirements for habitable space on the basement level shall be evaluated as follows:

- (1) Any room designed or configured for sleeping purposes shall have:
 - (a) exterior glazing area of not less than 6 percent of the floor area, and
 - (b) ventilation opening areas of not less than 3 percent of the floor area.

The determination as to whether a room is designed or configured for sleeping purposes shall be made using common sense. A room that is configured as a home office or living room, but where someone sleeps on occasion, is not a sleeping room.

- (2) For all other habitable spaces on the basement level, exterior glazing and ventilation openings equal to 2 percent of the net floor area of the habitable spaces shall be provided. The area shall be evaluated with respect to the net area of basement-level habitable spaces, as a whole, and not with respect to individual rooms, other than sleeping rooms. If natural ventilation is reduced in accordance with this memo, mechanical exhaust of 0.2 cfm/ft² shall be provided for the net area of basement-level habitable spaces. Thus, some habitable rooms may have no natural light or ventilation openings. Such rooms shall be provided with sufficient artificial light and relief openings or undercuts to facilitate exhaust.