



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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INSTALLATION GUIDELINES FOR GLASS BLOCK CLOSURE OF BASEMENT WINDOWS

NEW BASEMENTS: The 2006 International Residential Code (Section R310) requires basements and every sleeping room shall have at least one operable emergency escape and rescue opening. Such openings shall open directly into a public street, public alley, yard or court.

EXISTING BASEMENTS:

1.) A typical existing basement, with only one exit, may have all but one basement window replaced with glass block. If only one window remains operable, then a “vent block” must be provided in each of the glass block assemblies to maintain adequate venting potential. (It is recommended that the operable window face a neighbor or the street for security purposes.)

EXCEPTION: All basement windows may be closed with glass block if vent blocks are provided in each assembly AND, at a minimum, a battery-operated smoke detector is installed in a central area of the basement or in the ceiling adjacent to the bottom of the basement stairs.

2.) If an existing basement has 2 exits (either 2 stairs up to the 1st floor or a stair to the 1st floor and an exit door directly outside from the basement level), then all the windows may be replaced with glass block assemblies provided that the potential for cross-ventilation is retained.

3.) “Cellar” hatch-type exits from basements will need to be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine the ability to unlatch and lift the doors in all weather conditions. A pre-inspection, by the Area Building Inspector, of such a condition is recommended to avoid problems after work has begun.

To contact the Area Building Inspector: call between 7:30-9:00am, Monday-Friday, 651-266-9002.

Permit Inspections: The name and phone number of the Area Building Inspector will be on your permit receipt and the permit card.