



**TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**  
66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877      203-431-2766

## **BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCESSORY DWELLINGS**

The attached information has been provided by the Building Department, to assist in your understanding of the Code requirements for creation of an accessory dwelling within, or attached to, a single family dwelling.

Detached accessory dwellings are required to comply with Codes applicable to single family residential structures.

Renovations and additions for apartments  
(including “pre-existing” work constructed without appropriate permits)  
require the submission of a Development Permit Application  
(Zoning, Health or WPCA, and Building permits)  
and compliance with all applicable building and fire codes.

PLEASE CONTACT THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT FOR  
ADDITIONAL CODE INFORMATION AS NEEDED.

ACCESSORY DWELLING  
CONNECTICUT BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS  
WITHIN OR CONNECTED TO AN EXISTING SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING  
MOST IMPORTANT CODE SECTIONS THAT APPLY

The following is copied from the International Residential Code 2003 as amended by the  
State of Connecticut in 2005 and 2009.

**Definitions:**

**DWELLING.** Any building that contains one or two dwelling units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.

**[B] DWELLING UNIT.** A single unit providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

**Dwelling Separation:**

(Amd) **R317.1 Two-family dwellings.** Dwelling units in two-family dwellings shall be separated from each other and from common spaces serving both dwelling units by wall or floor-ceiling assemblies having not less than a 1-hour fire-resistance rating when tested in accordance with ASTM E 119. Fire-resistance-rated floor-ceiling and wall assemblies shall extend to and be tight against the exterior wall and wall assemblies shall extend to the underside of the roof sheathing. Fire-resistance-rated assemblies shall be supported to the foundation by construction with the same fire-resistance rating as the assembly supported.

**Exception:** A fire-resistance rating of ½ hour shall be permitted in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with NFPA 13.

**Doors, Type & Size:**

**R311.4 Doors.**

**R311.4.1 Exit door required.** Not less than one exit door conforming to this section shall be provided for each dwelling unit. The required exit door shall provide for direct access from the habitable portions of the dwelling to the exterior without requiring travel through a garage. Access to habitable levels not having an exit in accordance with this section shall be by a ramp in accordance with Section R311.6 or a stairway in accordance with Section R311.5.

(Amd) **R311.4.2 Door type and size.** The required exit door shall be a side-hinged door not less than 3 feet in width and 6 feet, 8 inches in height. Other doors shall be permitted to be side-hinged, swinging, sliding, bi-fold or revolving doors, shall not be required to comply with the minimum door width and shall be permitted to be not less than 6 feet, 6 inches in height.



## Minimum Ceiling Heights:

(Amd) **R305.1 Minimum height.** Habitable rooms, hallways, corridors, bathrooms, toilet rooms, laundry rooms and basements shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet. The required height shall be measured from the finished floor to the lowest projection from the ceiling.

### Exceptions:

1. Beams, girders, pipes, ducts or other obstructions spaced not less than 4 feet on center shall be permitted to project not more than 6 inches below the required ceiling height.
2. Basements without habitable spaces shall have a ceiling height of not less than 6 feet, 8 inches. Beams, girders, pipes, ducts or other obstructions shall be permitted to project not more than 4 inches below the required ceiling height.
3. Not more than 50 per cent of the required area of a habitable room or space is permitted to have a sloped or furred ceiling less than 7 feet in height. No portion of the required floor area shall be less than 5 feet in height.
4. Bathrooms are permitted to have sloped or furred ceilings, but shall have a minimum ceiling height of 6 feet, 8 inches over the fixtures and at the front clearance area for the fixtures as shown in Figure R307.2. A shower or tub equipped with a showerhead shall have a minimum ceiling height of 6 feet, 8 inches above a minimum area 30 inches by 30 inches at the showerhead.
5. Ceiling height in existing basements being converted to habitable space shall be not less than 6 feet, 10 inches clear except under beams, girders, pipes, ducts or other obstructions where the clear height shall be a minimum of 6 feet, 4 inches.

## Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings:

(Amd) **R310.1 Emergency escape and rescue openings required.** Habitable spaces located within basements and every sleeping room within the dwelling shall have at least one operable emergency escape and rescue opening. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency egress and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room, but shall not be required in adjoining habitable areas of the basement. Where emergency escape and rescue openings are provided, they shall have a sill height of not more than 44 inches above the floor. Where a door opening having a threshold below the adjacent ground elevation serves as an emergency escape and rescue opening and is provided with a bulkhead enclosure, the bulkhead enclosure shall comply with Section R310.3. Emergency escape and rescue openings with a finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation shall be provided with a window well in accordance with Section R310.2.

### Exceptions:

1. Habitable basements without sleeping rooms are not required to have emergency escape and rescue openings when they are provided with two remote, code-compliant stairways.
2. In existing buildings, basements being converted to habitable space without sleeping rooms are not required to have emergency escape and rescue openings.
3. The 44-inch maximum sill height shall be permitted to be measured vertically above a fixed, permanent platform, step or steps whose minimum width shall equal or exceed the operable width of the opening and shall be centered on such opening and which shall comply with Sections R311.5.3.1 and R311.5.3.2. Glazing in windows complying with this exception shall not be subject to the provisions of Section R308.4, item 10.



## Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors:

(Amd) **R313.1.1 Alterations and additions.** When alterations or additions requiring a permit occur, or when one or more sleeping rooms are added or created in existing dwellings, the entire dwelling shall be provided with smoke detectors located as required for new dwellings. The smoke detectors shall have a power source in accordance with Section R313.2.

### Exceptions:

1. The smoke detectors may be battery operated and are not required to be interconnected when other remodeling considerations do not require the removal of the appropriate wall and ceiling coverings to facilitate concealed interconnected wiring.
2. Alterations to the exterior surfaces of dwellings including, but not limited to, re-roofing, re-siding, window replacement and the construction of decks without roofs, are exempt from the requirements of this section.

(Add) **R313.3 Carbon monoxide detectors.** Carbon monoxide detectors shall be installed outside of each sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms. When more than one carbon monoxide detector is required to be installed within an individual dwelling unit the alarm devices shall be interconnected in such a manner that the actuation of one carbon monoxide detector will activate all of the carbon monoxide detectors in the individual unit. The alarm shall be clearly audible in all bedrooms over background noise levels with all intervening doors closed. All carbon monoxide detectors shall be listed and shall be installed in accordance with their listing and the manufacturer's installation instructions.

**Exception:** Carbon monoxide detectors shall not be required in dwelling units not containing a fuel-burning appliance, fireplace or attached garage.

(Add) **R313.3.1 Power source.** In new construction, the required carbon monoxide detectors shall be permanently installed and shall receive their primary power from the building wiring when such wiring is served from a commercial source. When primary power from the building wiring is interrupted, they shall receive power from a battery. Wiring shall be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than those required for overcurrent protection. Carbon monoxide detectors shall be permitted to be battery operated when installed in buildings without commercial power or in buildings that undergo alterations or additions regulated by Section R313.3.2.

(Add) **R313.3.2 Alterations and additions.** When alterations or additions requiring a permit occur, or when one or more sleeping rooms are added or created in existing dwellings, the entire dwelling shall be provided with carbon monoxide detectors located as required for new dwellings. The carbon monoxide detectors shall have a power source in accordance with Section R313.3.1.

### Exceptions:

1. The carbon monoxide detectors may be battery operated or plug-in and are not required to be interconnected when other remodeling considerations do not require the removal of the appropriate wall and ceiling coverings to facilitate concealed interconnected wiring.
2. Alterations to the exterior surfaces of dwellings including, but not limited to, re-roofing, re-siding, window replacement and the construction of decks without roofs, shall be exempt from the requirements of this section.
3. Carbon monoxide detectors shall not be required in dwelling units not containing a fuel-burning appliance, fireplace or attached garage.

ALL SPACE CONVERTED TO AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT  
REQUIRES A BUILDING PERMIT  
INSPECTIONS & CERTIFICATE of OCCUPANCY

A Development Application is required for the Change of Use from a Single Family to a Two Family Dwelling. The application shall have plans with sufficient information to comply with the above code sections. There could be other code requirements that will be determined at the time of plan review or when a field inspection is performed.

Combustion Air Shall Be Provided per Chapter 17 2003 IRC

FOR ALL

Fuel burning appliances Boilers, Furnaces, Hot water heaters etc.

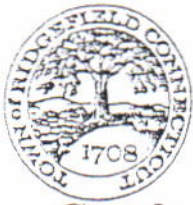
Attached is combustion air calculation sheet for your convenience.

Detached structures undergoing Alterations for an Accessory Dwelling Unit shall require a Development Application with plans showing floor plans, elevation and section through drawing to indicate structural, insulation, fire separation of the different areas.

State Modification request required when you can't comply with code.

State Modification Form must be completed by the Applicant and returned to this office for review and submission to the Office of State Building Inspector for Approval.





# Town of Ridgefield

TOWN HALL ANNEX - 66 PROSPECT STREET

RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT 06877 • 203/431-2743

## Combustion Air

## 2003 IRC

## Chapter 17

Building Department

Direct vent appliances and appliances equipped with a combustion air kit, do not require additional combustion air.

All fuel burning appliances (Furnaces, Hot Water Heater, etc.) require air for combustion based on 50 cubic feet of air for each 1000 BTU'S of appliance(s).

The air may be taken from the space the appliance(s) is located if sufficient or adjacent spaces (if volume is sufficient & connected by two openings of required size).

To see if you comply, please do the following calculation below for your space.

Length \_\_\_\_\_ x Width \_\_\_\_\_ = Area \_\_\_\_\_ x Height \_\_\_\_\_ = SPACE VOL. of air in cubic feet \_\_\_\_\_

BTU'S of your Appliance(s) \_\_\_\_\_ x 50 Cubic Ft = required VOL. in cubic feet \_\_\_\_\_  
1000

SPACE VOL. of air \_\_\_\_\_

APPLIANCE VOL. of air \_\_\_\_\_

The volume of air required for the appliance(s) must be equal to or less than the SPACE VOL. of air. If the space volume of air is less (not enough combustion air) outside air is required.

Connected spaces require two openings.

One opening must be located 12" from the floor the other must be located 12" from the ceiling.

Each opening shall have a clear opening equal to 1 sq. inch per 1000 Btu's but not be less than 100 sq. inches.

Calculations for openings:

Appliance BTU'S \_\_\_\_\_ x 1 sq. inch = \_\_\_\_\_ sq. inch of opening.  
1000

Metal louvers are 75% efficient, Wood louvers are 25% efficient; use calculations below for the type of louvers used.

Metal \_\_\_\_\_ sq. inch of opening ÷ .75 = \_\_\_\_\_ required size of louver in sq. inches

Wood \_\_\_\_\_ sq. inch of opening ÷ .25 = \_\_\_\_\_ required size of louver in sq. inches