
BASEMENT FINISHING



City of East Lansing

Planning Building Development
410 Abbot Road, Second Floor
East Lansing, MI 48823
Ph. 517-319-6871 or 517-319-6810
Website: cityofeastlansing.com

This publication provides guidelines for a basement finishing project of a single-family home. The code requirements herein are not all-inclusive and should not be construed to represent all code requirements for your project and are representative of all conditions that you may encounter.

You must obtain permits for an alteration. Listed below are the types of permits required, depending on the complexity of the project. Apply for your permits online at <https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/1979/21068/Apply-for-a-Permit-Online>.

- **Building permit** for all architectural and structural elements.
- **Electrical permit** for all electrical installations.
- **Mechanical permit** for all heating, cooling and ventilation systems.
- **Plumbing permit** for all installations of plumbing and gas piping systems.

HELPFUL HINT: *As the property owner, you may obtain permits in your own name providing you will be doing the work and not hiring someone to perform the work. If a contractor is to perform the work, it is required that a licensed contractor secures the permit and listed as the responsible party. In this way, the city will be in a better position to assist you in gaining compliance with codes if the work is defective.*

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

A *Certificate of Appropriateness application* may be required for an alteration of a property in an East Lansing Historic District. Questions regarding a *Certificate of Appropriateness* should be directed to the Community Development Analyst at 517-319-6828. The Historic Preservation Code applies to:

- Exterior changes such as additions, alterations (adding or changing windows, doors, etc.) to buildings (including garages and sheds) in designated Historic Districts.
- All sides of a structure visible from the street (generally the front and sides).
- Features protected by the Code include, but are not limited to: a building's general shape; gables, dormers and other roof features; cornices, brackets and eaves; size, shape, arrangement, number and size of window panes and muntins; beveled, leaded and stained glass; door and window trim; ornamental moldings; distinctive siding, such as stone, stucco, brick or patterned shingling; distinctive roofing, such as false thatch, slate and Spanish tile.

MINIMUM SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All submissions for a new residence must include the following:

- Electronic set of building plans (see below for requirements).
- Electronic copy of the house location survey.

HOUSE LOCATION SURVEY

If you do not have a copy of your house location survey, review your loan closing documents or contact your mortgage lending institution to obtain one. If you are unable to locate a copy of your survey through these sources, you will be required to hire a certified land surveyor or civil engineer to have one prepared. This is required if any construction is proposed on the exterior of the building, such as a basement egress window. House location surveys must meet the following requirements:

- No reduced, enlarged or faxed copies.
- The area of the addition drawn to scale.
- Provide the square footage or overall dimensions of the addition.

PERMIT PROCESS

- Apply for your permits online at <https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/1979/21068/Apply-for-a-Permit-Online>. The application will be converted to permit and will then advance to the plan review process.
- A building permit will be issued and emailed when all required approvals have been obtained and applicable fees have been paid. Once your permits are issued, you must post a copy on the job site until the project has received final approval.
- A building permit must be issued within 6 months of the application date or the application will be canceled.
- Permits that have no activity for 6 months or more will be canceled.

ELECTRICAL, MECHANICAL AND PLUMBING PERMIT PROCESS

Electrical, mechanical and plumbing permits are issued after the building permit is approved but may be processed at the same time. In most cases they do not require a plan submission. Code compliance will be determined at the time of the inspection.

FEES

- The fee schedule is located at <https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/DocumentCenter/View/2772/Building-Division-Fees-PDF?bidId=>
- Fees may be paid by cash/check, debit or credit card (Discover, Visa or MasterCard), online (Invoice Cloud).

BUILDING CODE

Your project is required to comply with the 2015 Michigan Residential Code (MRC), effective February 8, 2016, which incorporates the 2015 International Residential Code. You may purchase the MRC through the State of Michigan Bureau of Construction Codes, ph. 517-241-9313, or by visiting their website at <http://www.michigan.gov/bcc>.

- New emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a sill height not more than 44".
- All emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a minimum clear opening of 5.7 square feet. If the window is at grade, the minimum clear opening is reduced to 5.0 square feet.
- The minimum clear opening height is 24 inches.
- The minimum clear opening width is 20 inches.
- Emergency escape and rescue openings with a sill height below grade shall be provided with a window well in accordance with the code.
- Habitable spaces created in existing basements shall have a minimum ceiling height of not less than 6'-8". Obstructions may project within 6'-4" of the basement floor.
- An existing basement stair, landings, stairway width and handrails not otherwise being altered or modified shall be permitted to remain. Stairway headroom height on existing basement stairs being altered or modified shall not be reduced below the existing stairway finished headroom height.
- When alteration, repairs, or additions requiring a permit occur or when one or more sleeping rooms are created, the dwelling unit shall be provided with smoke alarms as required for new dwellings. The smoke alarms shall be interconnected and hard wired.

BUILDING PLANS

Building plans must meet the requirements or show the items listed below.

- Minimum scale of ¼" = 1'-0". All dimensions must be shown.
- Minimum sheet size: 8½" x 11". No sketches.
- Edition of the code used for the design.
- Name, address, email, and phone number of the building designer, if not noted on the permit application.
- If plans are prepared by a Michigan licensed design professional, at least one set of plans must bear the *original* seal, signature and date. This set will be retained by the City of East Lansing.
- List of material specifications including, but not limited to, grade and species of lumber, concrete and steel strength.
- Floor plans of the basement level with all rooms labeled with locations of smoke alarms indicated.
- Insulation R-values.
- Details and dimensions of new basement egress windows.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC UTILITIES

You must call the *MISS DIG System*, a free service, at *811 or 800-482-7171*, at least 3 full working days before excavating to ensure that the construction does not interfere with underground utility lines. *The MISS DIG System Member Utilities* will mark the approximate location of their underground public utility lines at no charge. If you fail to contact *Miss Dig* and damage occurs, you may be liable for all costs of repair.

INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

A copy of the approved permit and building plans must be on the job site and must be available to the inspector during each inspection. Approval must be obtained prior to proceeding with the next applicable element.

- ***Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing Rough:*** Rough inspection required prior to or completed and approved before scheduling the building rough inspection.
- ***Building Rough:*** Concrete or masonry walls and slabs must be approved. Sill plates must be installed and secured to the foundation. Structure must be weather tight. Wall and roof sheathing must be installed. Windows and doors must be installed. Electrical, mechanical and plumbing rough inspections must be completed and approved before the building rough inspection.
- ***Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing Final:*** Final inspection required prior to or completed and approved before the building final inspection.
- ***Building Final:*** Any electrical, mechanical or plumbing permit final inspections must be approved or completed before the final building inspection. The structure must be complete and ready for use and occupancy.

SCHEDULING AN INSPECTION

It is the responsibility of the permit holder or their representative to notify the city when the stages of construction are reached that requires an inspection. Ladders, scaffolds, and testing equipment required to complete an inspection must be provided. Inspection requests may be made by calling our main office number or your inspector directly.

Administrative Secretary	517-319-6871
Administrative Secretary	517-319-6810
Plan Reviewer	517-319-6803
Building Inspector	517-319-6921
Electrical Inspector	517-319-6807
Plumbing Inspector	517-319-6816
Mechanical Inspector	517-319-6983
Building Official	517-319-6878