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Tips for Residential Basement Buildout

Finishing your unfinished basement can be a great way to increase your home's value while giving you the extra space you need. It is a very popular endeavor because the basics are already in place, the structure is built, you just need to partition the basement in the way you want it.

There are some basic things the Building Department will need from you at the time of permit, yes you do need a permit to do any construction in your unfinished basement. So, first things first, you must make an application for a permit, that will require that you submit plans for your buildout. This is what we want to talk about today. We do not require stamped plans from a design professional for residential projects unless there is a special engineering problem like removing a wall or a similar event that might call into question the structural stability of the structure.

For the most part we receive CAD or hand drawn basement plans because you are just creating partitions, but there is still much we need to know to approve a buildout. This list is not all encompassing, but it should help you understand what we are looking for.

- Label all rooms, we must know the function of each room
- Emergency escape and rescue openings, basements and every sleeping room require a window or door that opens directly to the outside and allows you to move away from the structure. We also need the size of doors and windows on the plan.
- Appliances: Show the location of water heaters, furnaces, ranges, fireplaces, etc. Let us know if the appliances are gas or electric
- Plumbing fixtures: Show the location of plumbing fixtures, let us know if they are existing or new
- Electrical: Show the location of electrical receptacles and if they are GFCI receptacles, show the location of lighting fixtures, last but not least show the location of smoke/carbon monoxide detectors

That is the basic plan information we need on a basement buildout, one other thing to keep in mind, if you are adding a bedroom and you are on a septic tank system, please contact

[Gwinnett County Environmental Health](#) before submitting your plan to get approval for the added bedroom.

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