GWINNETT COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
446 West Crogan Street, Suite 300 | Lawrenceville, GA 30046-2440
678.518.6000
GwinnettCounty.com

Basement Finishing of a Home Building Permit Requirements
(Revised August 2012)

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance in obtaining a Building Permit for finishing a basement in a one family home. A Building Permit must be obtained prior to any land disturbance or building construction.

Step 1 – Obtain Approval from Gwinnett Environmental Health if the Home is Served by a Private Septic System. (Note: If the home is served by the county sewer system, this step is NOT required.) If the home is served by a private septic tank system, Gwinnett Environmental Health must approve the basement finish before a Building Permit can be issued. The purpose for this approval is to ensure that the existing or proposed septic tank & drain field is sized appropriately, especially if bedrooms are proposed. For review and approval information, please contact Environmental Health at 455 Grayson Highway, Lawrenceville GA, or call 770.963.5132. Proof of approval by Environmental Health must be attached to the Building Permit Application.

Step 2 – Prepare & Submit a Basement Floor Plan.
The applicant for a building permit must prepare a "Floor Plan" of the proposed finished basement area. This plan must be drawn "to scale." All rooms must be labeled for their purpose. Each sleeping room must meet the **Emergency Escape Requirements of Section R310 of the International Residential Code**. The floor plan must be attached to the Building Permit Application.

Step 3 – Complete the Building Permit Application.

The above forms may be obtained from the Building Permits Counter, from the webpage www.gwinnettcounty.com ("A-Z Index"), or by calling 678.518.6020.

Step 4 – Obtain Building Permit at the Building Permits Counter of P&D.
Submit the Building Permit Application and Basement Floor Plan, and permit fee. The fee, rounded to the nearest dollar, is calculated as follows: $.25 multiplied by the total heated square feet and the result then multiplied by $0.006, and $6 per $1,000 of estimated construction cost for each heated square foot (minimum fee is $30), plus a $25 Certificate of Occupancy fee. Fees must be paid at time of permit issuance.

Other Information.
The Building Permit includes any electrical, HVAC and plumbing systems, as applicable. State licensed electrical, HVAC and plumbing subcontractors must submit Subcontractor Affidavit forms to P&D at least two (2) days prior to requesting their inspections. Inspections are requested by going to our zip portal: https://aca-prod.accela.com/GWINNETT/Welcome.aspx . Homeowners installing electrical, HVAC and plumbing systems themselves must also submit these affidavits. The Building Permit Yard Card must be posted at the site and be visible from the street. The submitted "Floor Plan" must be present at the time of inspection. Electrical, HVAC and plumbing rough-in inspections, followed by a framing inspection, must be scheduled and successfully passed prior to scheduling a final inspection. Prior to occupancy, a final inspection must be scheduled, successfully passed, and a Certificate of Occupancy obtained. The final inspection will include final electrical, HVAC and plumbing.

Emergency Escape & Rescue Openings for Homes: Excerpt from the Residential Building Code Section R310.
The following is an excerpt from Section R301 of the Residential Building Code regarding emergency escape & rescue openings in a dwelling. These requirements apply when building a new home, adding on to a home and when finishing a basement in a home.

R310.1 Emergency Escape and Rescue Required. *Basements with habitable space and every sleeping room shall have at least one openable emergency escape and rescue window or exterior door opening for emergency escape and rescue. Where openings are provided a s means of escape and rescue, 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. The net clear opening dimensions required by this section shall be obtained by the normal operation of the window or door opening from the inside. Escape and rescue window openings with a finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation shall be provided with a window well in accordance with Section R310.2.*

R310.1.1 Minimum Opening Area. *All emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet.* ***Exception:*** *Grade floor openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5 square feet.*

R310.1.2 Minimum Opening Height. *The minimum net clear opening height shall be 24 inches.*

R310.1.3 Minimum Opening Width. *The minimum net clear opening width shall be 20 inches.*

R310.1.4 Operational Constraints. *Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys or tools.*

 Note: "**net clear opening**" means the actual airspace through which a person could exit when the window is open.
 Note: using the minimum width and height of an opening will not equal the minimum required opening area for escape.