



CHELAN COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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TITLE: DEFINITION OF “UNFINISHED” AND “SEMI-FINISHED” BASEMENTS OR OTHER AREAS

Policy Summary:

For the purposes of conducting a code review, determining use clarification (occupancy), and determining project valuation, this policy defines the terms “unfinished”, “semi-finished”, “finished” when referring to basements or other areas.

Background:

Per Chelan County Code 3.24.070 (2) The building official shall use the latest Building Valuation Data Sheet published by the International Code Council to determine the project valuation. Footnotes b, c, and d are not adopted of the Building Valuation Data Sheet published by the International Code Council. Therefore, the valuation depending on use and occupancy shall be classified either an R-3 or U with no allowable reduction of cost per sq. ft. of construction value. Some projects may elect to not complete the “finish” leaving certain areas in a “semi-finished” condition as defined below. The building code does not specifically define the terms “unfinished” and “semi-finished”.

Policy:

In order to assure consistency and clarify this issue for the public, this policy provides definitions for the terms “unfinished”, “semi-finished.”, and “finished”.

When assessing minimum code compliance or assigning valuation from the adopted valuation per the CCC to “unfinished”, “semi-finished”, or “finished” basements or other areas the following definitions will be utilized:

- A. **“Unfinished”** basements or other areas: An unheated portion or area *not intended* as a habitable or conditioned space and limited to storage, housing of mechanical equipment, general work area or similar uses. If there is plumbing in the area, it will be limited to floor drains, water and drain lines serving only mechanical equipment, or other similar purposes. There will be no other framing for interior walls other than as required for structural support. The area will not be insulated other than the required ceiling/floor separation. The ceiling height may be as low as 6 feet 8 inches except for under beams, girders, ducts or other obstructions where the clear height may be not less than 6 feet 4 inches. Such spaces shall be valued as a U occupancy. Such areas are not allowed to be “habitable” spaces.

- B. “Semi-finished”** basement or other areas: An area intended for future use as habitable and conditioned space and/or similar use that *may not be dry-walled or heated*. These spaces shall have a clear ceiling height of not less than 7 feet. Wall partitions may be rough framed, have rough-in plumbing, mechanical, and electrical. All plumbing for fixtures shall be protected from freezing, capped and fixtures may not be set. Such spaces shall be valued as an R-3 occupancy. Such spaces will be considered as future “habitable” spaces.
- i. Exterior walls shall be insulated and an approved vapor barrier installed.
 - ii. Slab insulation (if required) shall be installed.
 - iii. Since the current space is not heated, the floor/ceiling separation is required to be insulated to not less than R-30.
 - iv. Required means of egress shall be provided directly from the basement area.
 - v. Smoke/CO2 detector(s) shall be installed and operational as required.
- C. *ALL Heated*** spaces will be considered as “**finished**” and constructed to comply with all applicable codes. Such spaces shall be valued as an R-3 occupancy. Such spaces are considered as “habitable” spaces.

Note: The assigned inspector will verify the “**unfinished**”, “**semi-finished**”, or “**finished**” condition of the basement at final inspection. Basements found to be at a phase that is greater than originally stated and permitted in the approved plans and permit shall be directed to re-submit plans, application, and pay any additional fees if necessary.

Note: “Unfinished” projects that proceed to “semi-finished” or “finished” areas after final inspection approval shall be considered as work conducted without a permit. The owner/applicant will be required to obtain a new permit for the finished work and will be assessed appropriate investigation fees as applicable.

Structures built with manufactured joint systems (e.g. TJI) will be required to have ½” sheetrock or 5/8” wood structural panels installed on the underside of the floor/ceiling assembly per IRC Section 302.13

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