

Bedroom Requirements in Massachusetts ***(and most areas of the US)***

Note: *While any local building department can allow exceptions to these requirements – ANY BEDROOM NOT MEETING THESE MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS CAN POSE A POTENTIAL HAZARD*

ALL BEDROOMS SHOULD MEET THE FOLLOWING MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS:

Gas appliance restrictions: Gas appliances are **not allowed in bedrooms**. *(There are some rare exceptions to this – all gas appliances can be potential hazards in bedrooms regardless)*

Fireplaces: Fireplaces **cannot be installed in bedrooms**. *(There are rare exceptions for sealed gas units which get their combustion air from the exterior and are allowed by the local building department) This is important - as a fireplace can consume the oxygen in the room while occupant(s) sleep! Any fireplace in a bedroom should be sealed / made non-functional for safety.*

Fuel tank restrictions: Fuel tanks are **not allowed in bedrooms**. All fuel tanks should be **at least 10 feet away** from the room.

Egress window size and height requirements: Every bedroom must have at least one egress window that opens directly to the outside. The **window must be at least 24 inches wide and 20 inches high**, and it must be located **within 44 inches of the floor** - no higher. Windows *less than 18 inches from the floor must have properly rated safety glass*. The window must be located so that it **can be opened from the inside without the use of keys or tools**. *(This means that any security grate over the window **MUST be easily opened from the bedroom**)*

Bedroom door size requirements: The door to a bedroom must be at least **28 inches wide and 78 inches high**.

Heat source requirements: Every bedroom **must have a heat source** that can maintain a minimum temperature of **68 degrees Fahrenheit**.

Electrical lighting requirements: Every bedroom must have **at least one ceiling light** that provides at least **10 foot-candles of light**. *(This is sometimes waived in older buildings with a minimum of 2 electrical receptacles)*

Electrical receptacle requirements: Every bedroom must have **at least one electrical receptacle**. *(2 if no light is installed)*

Ceiling height requirements: The ceiling height in a bedroom must be **at least 7 feet**.

Square footage requirements: The minimum square footage for a bedroom is **70 square feet** for a single occupant, **100 square feet** for two occupants, and **50 square feet** for each additional occupant.

Closet requirements: Every bedroom must have a closet that is at least **7 feet wide and 5 feet deep**. *(This is OFTEN waived in older buildings - and some areas do not appear to enforce this at all)*

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Window pit requirements: If a bedroom egress window is below grade then there must be a window pit.

Massachusetts bedroom egress window pit requirements:

Window sill height: The window sill height must be **no more than 44 inches above the floor of the pit**. The window sill should also be a **minimum 6 inches over the bottom of the pit** (to help prevent leaks).

Pit drainage: The pit must be **properly drained** to prevent water accumulation.

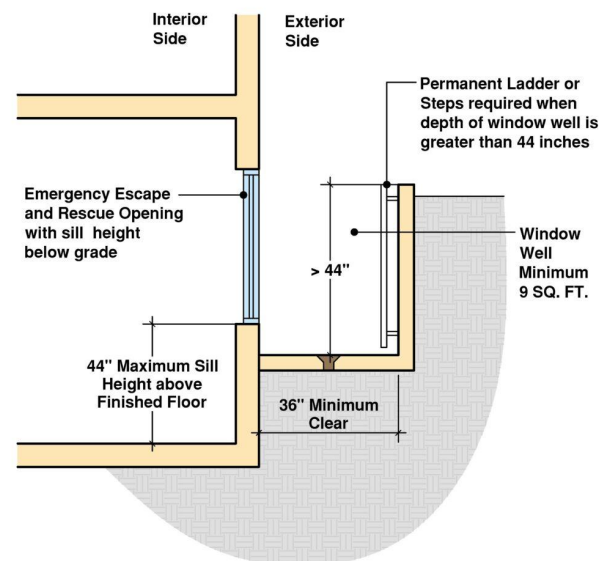
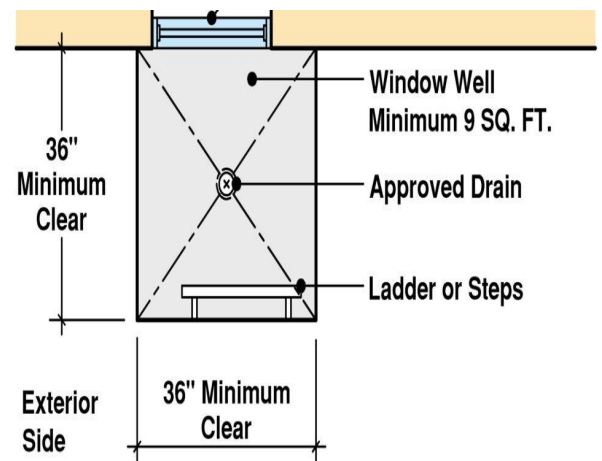
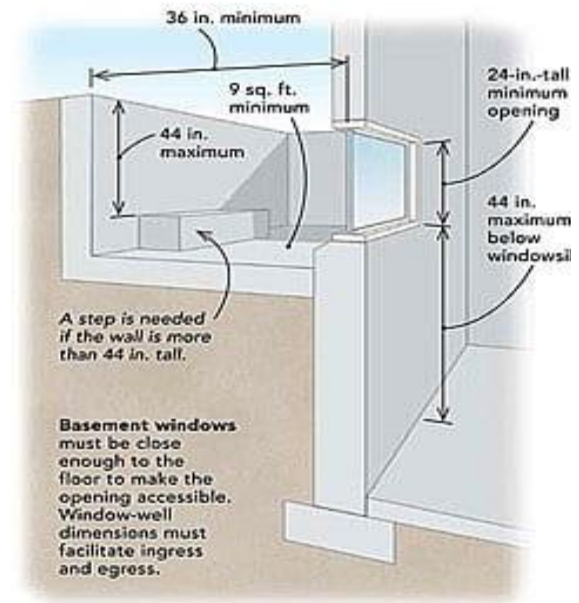
Pit guardrails: If the pit is **more than 30 inches deep**, it **needs guardrails**. The guardrails must be at least 42 inches high and have a spacing of no more than 4 inches.

Ladder: If the pit is **more than 72 inches deep**, a ladder (or steps) must be provided. Ladders must be at least **36 inches wide** and have **rungs spaced no more than 12 inches apart** and be spaced a **minimum 3 inches away from the pit wall**.

Pit size requirements: The pit must have a **minimum width of 36 inches** and a **minimum depth of 36 inches**. The pit must also have a **minimum headroom of 60 inches**.

Here are some additional requirements:

- The window well **must be accessible from inside the bedroom**.
- The window well must be **free of obstructions** that could impede escape. (*This also means **NO locks or other security which needs keys or tools to open***)
- The window well **must be well-lit**.



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For 4 or more unit commercial building bedroom requirements, the following additional requirements apply:

Sprinkler requirements: All bedrooms in a 4 or more unit commercial building **must be equipped with a sprinkler system.** (*This is often waived in older buildings*)

Egress window requirement exceptions: The egress window requirement can be waived if the bedroom is located on the first floor and there is an **exterior door that opens directly to the outside.** *The requirement can also be waived if the building has a common hallway with sprinklers, 2 separate egresses, and common hallway self closing fire doors – depending on the municipal building department’s judgment.*

Common hallway fire requirements: There must be a ***fire door between each bedroom and the common hallway.*** The fire door must be self-closing and have a minimum fire rating of 20 minutes.

When in doubt about a room’s ability to be used as a bedroom, **contact your local building department.** (*Do NOT contact the assessor's office – we OFTEN see rooms “called” bedrooms by them that were in fact NOT SAFE FOR USE AS BEDROOMS*)

It is also a good idea to consider installing (or having one on hand) a bedroom “escape” ladder for all bedrooms where the windows are over 6 feet off the ground (These ladders can often be shortened / lengthened to perfectly reach the ground). This will allow safe climbing instead of dangerous “Jumping” to escape a fire.



Note: ALL requirements can change at any time. For maximum accuracy, always consult your local building department on their bedroom requirements. Following all bedroom rules and requirements does not indicate or imply that injury in bedrooms will not occur. All information obtained through the web from public sources.