



Planning & Development Services

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IRC Code Section R303: Light & Ventilation

2006 International Residential Code Changes

Section R303 of the IRC reduces the 1997 UBC required percentages of natural light from 10% to 8% and natural ventilation from 5% to 4%. Except where egress requirements are mandated by IRC Section R310, artificial light and ventilation may be used to meet these requirements.

Section R303: Light & Ventilation

R.303.1 Habitable Rooms. All habitable rooms shall be provided with aggregate glazing area of not less than 8 percent of the floor area of such rooms. Natural ventilation shall be through windows, doors, louvers or other approved openings to the outdoor air. Such openings shall be provided with ready access or shall be otherwise readily controllable by the building occupants. The minimum openable area to the outdoors shall be 4 percent of the floor area being ventilated.

Exceptions

1. The glazed areas need not be openable where the opening is not required by Section R310 and an approved mechanical ventilation system is provided capable of producing 0.35 air change per hour in the room or a whole-house mechanical ventilation system is installed capable of supplying outdoor ventilation air of 15 cubic feet per minute (cfm) (7.08/L/s) per occupant computed on the basis of two occupants for the first bedroom and one occupant for each additional bedroom.

2. The glazed areas need not be provided in rooms where Exception 1 above is satisfied and artificial light is provided capable of producing an average illumination of 6 foot-candles (6.46 lux) over the area of the room at a height of 30 inches (762 mm) above the floor level.
3. Use of sunroom additions and patio covers, as defined in Section R202, shall be permitted for natural ventilation if in excess of 40 percent of the exterior sunroom walls are open, or are inclosed only by insect screening.

R.303.2 Adjoining Rooms. For the purpose of determining light and ventilation requirements, any room shall be considered as a portion of an adjoining room when at least one-half of the area of the common wall is open and unobstructed and provides an opening of not less than one-tenth of the floor area of the interior room but not less than 25 square feet (2.32m²).

R.303.3 Bathrooms. Bathrooms, water closet compartments and other similar rooms shall be provided with aggregate glazing area in windows of not less than 3 square feet (0.279m²), one-half of which must be openable.

Exceptions

1. The glazed areas shall not be required where artificial light and a mechanical ventilation system are provided. The minimum ventilation rates shall be 50 cfm (23.6L/s) for intermittent ventilation or 20 cfm (9.4L/s) for continuous ventilation. Ventilation air from the space shall be exhausted directly to the outside.