

## **BASIC LIFE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR DWELLINGS**

New dwellings constructed in the Town of Bucksport must comply with basic life safety requirements. The purpose of these requirements is to improve the opportunity for the occupants to safely escape in the event of fire or smoke in the dwelling, and to allow firefighters to safely enter a dwelling to conduct a rescue if necessary. Following is a list of the basic requirements:

1. The dwelling must have at least one exterior hinged door that is no less than 36 inches wide.
2. Bedroom doors may be no less than 28 inches wide.
3. Bedroom windows must provide a clear opening of not less than 5.7 sq. ft. The windowsill can be no more than 44 inches above the floor and no more than 20 feet above the ground.
4. Stairways must have a clear width of no less than 36 inches. Riser height may be no more than 7 3/4 inches. Tread width may be no less than 10 inches, not including the nosing projection if any. A handrail must be installed on at least one side of the stairway and within 34 to 38 inches above the tread surface.
5. Guardrails are required to be no less than 42 inches high, except a railing height of no less than 36 inches is allowed for decks. Openings between guardrail components may not exceed 4 inches in width.
6. Basements must have an emergency escape, which may be a window or door meeting minimum size requirements. This is in addition to the typical interior stairway connecting the basement with the floor above.
7. Electric smoke detectors with battery backup must be provided within every bedroom, outside the vicinity of every bedroom, and on every floor level of the building including basements. For maximum effectiveness, it is recommended that the smoke detectors be interconnected so that all will sound when one is activated.
8. A carbon monoxide detector is required in the dwelling in or near bedrooms. The unit may be a combination smoke and carbon monoxide detector.

There are exceptions and variations to the above requirements. Please contact the Code Enforcement Officer (469-7368) if you have any questions or need further information.