



# THE JOURNAL OF LIGHT CONSTRUCTION

A Builderburg Group Publication

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JLC'S

# Letters

## About Those Egress Windows

To the Editor:

A quick note about the article "Remodeling Basements" (2/97): Both BOCA and CABO require egress windows in sleeping rooms to have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet (first) and the minimum of 24 inches high and 20 inches wide (second). A reduction to 5.0 square feet is allowed for grade-level bedrooms.

The sketch on page 41 is informative but incorrect by most building codes in the U.S. I suggest that such drawings of this type should reflect a specific code and state just that, but also include the phrase "check with your local municipality for the code requirements in your area."

Michael Bond  
 Topton, Pa.

## Author Paul Eldrenkamp responds:

Article 3401.10.3 of the Massachusetts Building Code, subtitled "Emergency egress," states: "Sleeping rooms shall have at least one openable window or exterior door to permit emergency egress or rescue. A required window must be openable from the inside without the use of separate tools, and shall conform to the following:

1. the sill height shall be not more than 44 inches above the finish floor;
2. shall provide a minimum net clear opening area of 3.3 square feet with a rectangle having minimum net clear opening dimensions of 20 inches by 24 inches, in either direction. If a double-hung unit is used, then such dimensions shall apply to the bottom half."

Note that my opening paragraph on page 41 contains just the information you suggest, while the caption beneath the illustration begins, "Under the author's local code...."

## Basement Smoke Alarm

To the Editor:

While the basement is being remodeled would be a good time to install an AC/DC smoke detector in the basement, interconnected with the floor above. This could be a critical safety feature to basement occupants who might not hear a detector sounding above the noise of the stereo or TV. Your customers might appreciate your extra thoughtfulness for their safety. Local codes in some areas already require this feature.

William R. Volovski  
Building Official  
Plainville, Conn.

## I-Joist Rafter Hangers

To the Editor:

I found Curtis Eck's article "Roof Framing with Wood I-Joists" (1/97) to be very informative. However, there are some points about connections that require clarification.

Mr. Eck indicated that strapping for steep slopes may be required for I-joist rafters framed into a ridge beam where the roof slope exceeds 7/12. It is important for the designer to reference the connector manufacturer's literature or code evaluation reports pertinent to specific products to determine whether or not supplemental strapping is required. For example, the Simpson Strong-Tie LSSU series hanger Mr. Eck referenced earlier for rafter-to-ridge connections does not require strapping for slopes exceeding 7/12.

Mr. Eck also indicated that for rafter-to-wall plate connections, sloped seat connectors like Simpson Strong-Tie's VPA Variable Pitch Connector may be used, but that the connector may have limited load carrying capacity. Again, it is important to reference the appropriate literature. I have found many instances where the allowable download for the sloped seat connector exceeded the maximum allowable end reaction of the I-joist.

J. Bret Turley, P.E.

Research and Development Engineer  
Simpson Strong-Tie  
Columbus, Ohio

## Drum Traps

To the Editor:

I have over 60 years in the plumbing business, as apprentice, journeyman, and Master, and for several years I sat on the local plumbing examining board. In "Venting Island Sinks" (*Kitchen & Bath*, 2/97), the author states: "I've seen cases where plumbers install drum traps upside down to allow access from the basement. The result is an inverted cover that will ooze gook for years until it finally fails."

In fact, although many drum traps are installed with the cover up, particularly in second-floor bathrooms, in order to access the lid, they are designed to be installed inverted so that the gasket remains wet and seals the trap. If they ooze stuff from the beginning of installation, you should call the installer back.

Robert Livingston  
Registered Master Plumber  
Johnstown, Pa.

### *Joe Stoddard responds:*

*Good point: If a drum trap (or any fitting) has a wet seal gasket, it must be installed so the gasket can't dry out. Some drum traps have such a gasket, and some — particularly the hardware store CPVC variety — don't. These "cheapies" — which a master plumber would never use — are the ones that cause the problem I referred to.*

**KEEP 'EM COMING!** Letters must be signed and include the writer's address. *The Journal of Light Construction* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to *JLC*, RR 2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477; or e-mail to 76176.2053@compuserve.com.

