

2021 Virginia Construction Code

CHAPTER 12 INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT

SECTION 1204 LIGHTING

1204.1 General.

Every space intended for human occupancy shall be provided with natural light by means of exterior glazed openings in accordance with [Section 1204.2](#) or shall be provided with artificial light in accordance with [Section 1204.3](#). Exterior glazed openings shall open directly onto a *public way* or onto a *yard* or *court* in accordance with [Section 1205](#).

1204.2 Natural light.

The minimum net glazed area shall be not less than 8 percent of the floor area of the room served.

1204.2.1 Adjoining spaces.

For the purpose of natural lighting, any room is permitted to be considered as a portion of an adjoining room where 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 or 25 square feet (2.32 m²), whichever is greater.

Exception: Openings required for natural light shall be permitted to open into a *sunroom* with *thermal isolation* or a patio cover where the common wall provides a glazed area of not less than one-tenth of the floor area of the interior room or 20 square feet (1.86 m²), whichever is greater.

1204.2.2 Exterior openings.

Exterior openings required by [Section 1204.2](#) for natural light shall open directly onto a *public way*, *yard* or *court*, as set forth in [Section 1205](#).

Exceptions:

1. Required exterior openings are permitted to open into a roofed porch where the porch meets all of the following criteria:
 - 1.1. Abuts a *public way*, *yard* or *court*.
 - 1.2. Has a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet (2134 mm).
 - 1.3. Has a longer side at least 65 percent open and unobstructed.
2. Skylights are not required to open directly onto a *public way*, *yard* or *court*.

1204.3 Artificial light.

Artificial light shall be provided that is adequate to provide an average illumination of 10 footcandles (107 lux) over the area of the room at a height of 30 inches (762 mm) above the floor level.

1204.4 Stairway illumination.

Stairways within *dwelling units* and *exterior stairways* serving a *dwelling unit* shall have an illumination level on tread runs of not less than 1 footcandle (11 lux). *Stairways* in other occupancies shall be governed by [Chapter 10](#).

1204.4.1 Controls.

The control for activation of the required *stairway* lighting shall be in accordance with [NFPA 70](#).

1204.5 Emergency egress lighting.

The *means of egress* shall be illuminated in accordance with [Section 1008.1](#).