Residential Security Bars, Grills, Doors, Stairs, Exiting, and Smoke Detectors

There has been an increase in the number of window bars, grills and security doors installed in Daly City. The installation of these bars and doors are a safety concern to the Building Division and the Police and Fire Departments.

Security Bars, Grills and Grates

Bars installed on bedroom windows may restrict the ability of residents to escape from the building in an emergency. Residents must be able to have a readily accessible escape route in the case of an emergency.

The building code states: bars, grills, grates, or similar devices may be installed on emergency escape or rescue (bedroom) windows or doors provided:

1. The devices are equipped with approved release mechanisms which are operable from the inside without use of a key or special knowledge or effort; and

2. The building is equipped with smoke detectors installed in accordance with Section 907.2.10.1.2 of the 2007 California Building Code.

A building permit is required to install security bars, grills or grates.

Windows in sleeping rooms are required by the building code. Windows provide emergency exit, natural light and ventilation. Bars covering bedroom windows must be openable from the inside without the use of a "key", special knowledge or effort. The windows must have a minimum open width of twenty inches (20") ; the minimum open height is twenty-four inches (24") and a total minimum operable area of five-and-seven-tenths square feet (5.7-sq. ft.). The use of bars covering windows should not prevent emergency egress or the amount of light that enters the room. The window for light must be a minimum of 8% of the floor area.

Exiting Requirements

Dwellings are required to have at least one exit that has a continuous and unobstructed passage to the outside. This exit includes doors, gates, ramps, and stairways. Exit doors must be the swing type, a minimum of thirty-six inches (36") wide and six feet eight inches (6'-8") tall. Gates and security doors have the same requirements as doors. There shall be a floor or landing on each side of the door. Landings shall be level within one inch (1") of the door threshold in multi-family dwellings or the landing can be seven and three-quarter inches (7 ¾") lower than the doorsill in single-family dwellings (Section 1008.1.4 Exc 3). The landing shall be at least as wide as the door (36" minimum) and at least thirty-six inches (36") in length. A door may not swing over stairs or landing more than 1".

Stairs

Stairs are also part of the exiting system in most homes in Daly City. The maximum rise of a stair in single-family dwellings is seven and three-quarter inches (7 ¾”). The minimum run is ten inches (10”). If risers are solid and tread run is less than 11”, provide a 3” to 1½” nosing. At least one side of the stairs shall have a handrail. Both ends of the handrail must return to the wall or a newel post. The top of the handrails and handrail extensions shall be placed not less than thirty-four inches (34”), or more than thirty-eight inches (38") above the nosing of the treads and landings. Handrails shall be
continuous the full length of the stairs. A break may occur at landings.

**Smoke Detectors**

All residences should have a smoke detector installed at a point centrally located outside each bedroom or sleeping area.

Current building codes require a smoke detector be installed in each sleeping room, in the hall leading to the sleeping areas, and if there is more than one level of living area, there should be a smoke detector on each level.

In existing homes, smoke detectors can be battery powered. In new construction, additions or remodels, where electric power is available, the smoke detectors must receive their primary power from the building electrical system and be provided with battery backup. Smoke detectors must be interconnected so that when one sounds, they all sound.

Please call the Building Division at (650) 991-8061 if you need additional information.