

NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

Though the code retains the traditional standards for natural light from windows, electric lighting satisfies the minimum illumination requirements for habitable rooms in almost all cases. The minimum average illumination level for artificial lighting in habitable rooms is 6 footcandles, far below typical indoor illumination levels and lighting industry recommendations of 50 footcandles or more. While windows may be eliminated for lighting purposes, they may still be required for emergency escape and rescue and fresh air ventilation purposes. [Ref. R303.1]

Stairway illumination

As part of the egress path and a component presenting increased hazards of fall injuries, stairway design and construction, including adequate illumination, is particularly important to safety in a dwelling. The IRC requires a minimum illumination level of 1 footcandle at treads and landings of interior stairs. Light sources must be placed in the immediate vicinity of each landing or directly over each flight of stairs. For other than continuous or automatic illumination (such as provided with motion sensors), interior stairways with six or more risers require a wall switch at each floor level.

Exterior stairs require a light source located near the top landing. For other than continuous or automatic illumination, the IRC requires control by a wall switch located inside the dwelling (Figure 10-2). [Ref. R303.6 and E3903.3]

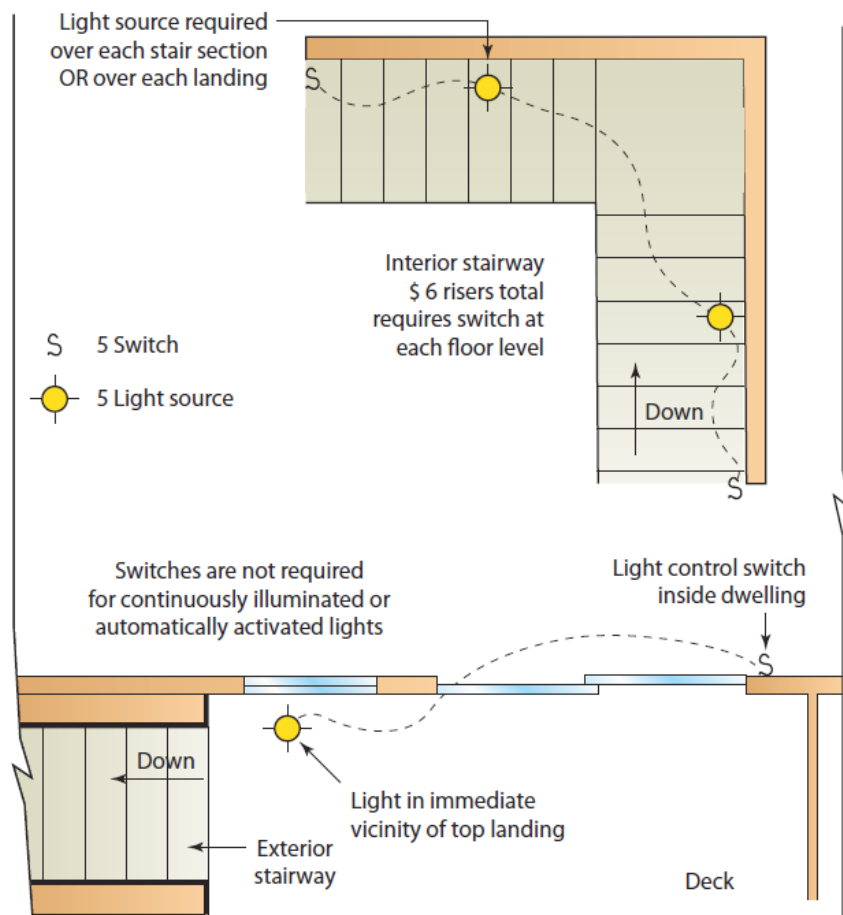


FIGURE 10-2 Stairway illumination