



Basement Egress Window/Emergency Escape Opening Policy

Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings, commonly known as Egress Windows, are required in basement levels under several circumstances. Please note that doors which open directly to the exterior of the building and exterior windows that meet the size requirements of the Emergency Escape/Egress Window handout will qualify as emergency escape and rescue openings. The following explains when emergency escape and rescue openings are required in basements.

- 1. New Homes:** All new homes require an emergency escape opening in the basement.
- 2. Basement Finishes-Bedrooms:** Existing basements being finished with a bedroom must have an egress window installed in the bedroom.

Note: Finishing an existing basement without a bedroom does not require an egress window.

- 3. Basement Wall Replacements:** Basements undergoing a 100% wall replacement require an emergency escape opening.

Exceptions: The following basements do not require emergency escape openings:

- a. Basements less than 200 square feet used only as mechanical rooms.
- b. Basements unable to be finished. Some basements have elements that leave them unable to be finished, for example basements with ceiling heights less than 6'-8".

Note: If you are conducting a 100% basement wall replacement and believe it does not require an emergency escape opening, please contact the Permit & Development Center for a determination.

Technical requirements for emergency escape openings can be found in the Emergency Escape/Egress Window handout at:

Emergency Egress Windows

Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings

March 2017

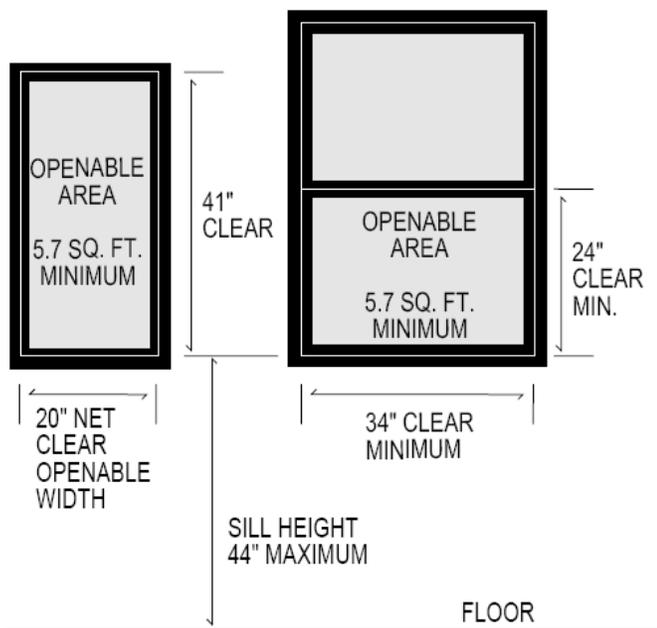
Basement bedroom/ sleeping room requirements

All basements, habitable attics, and sleeping rooms shall have at least one egress window (*see illustration*) meeting all these requirements:

- Sill height not more than 44 inches above floor.
- Openable area not less than 5.7 square feet* (820 sq inches)
- Opening height not less than 24 inches.
- Opening width not less than 20 inches.

* Exception: Openings located where the sill height is not more than 44 inches above or below adjacent grade level shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.0 square feet.

Minimum Size for Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings



* Emergency escape windows shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys or tools.

Window wells

The minimum clear horizontal dimensions shall allow the window to be fully opened and provide a minimum accessible net clear opening of 9 square feet with minimum dimensions of 36 inches.

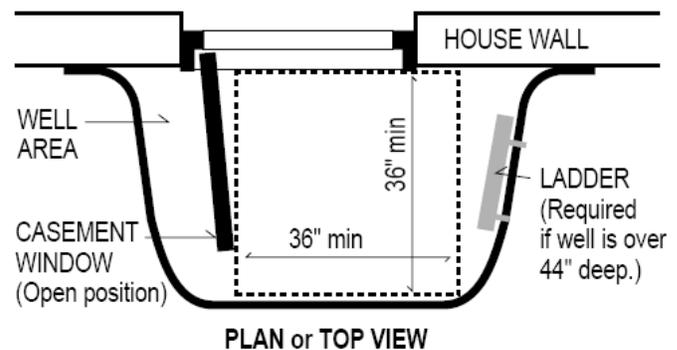
Exception:

- 1) Ladders or steps shall be permitted to encroach a maximum of 6 inches into the required dimensions of the window well.

Ladders and Steps

Window wells with a vertical depth of more than 44 inches shall be equipped with an approved permanently affixed ladder or steps that are usable with the window in the fully open position. Ladders or rungs shall have an inside dimension of at least 12 inches. They must project at least 3 inches from the wall and be spaced not more than 18 inches on center, vertically for the full height of the window well.

Minimum access WITH WINDOW FULLY OPEN: 36 inches measured horizontally from the foundation wall to the well and from the window surface to the well. *Note: 3 foot by 3 foot wells will NOT provide the required access for casement windows.*



Note: Centering a window well at the window might not give you the *required* minimum 36 inches. **Measure carefully!**



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Emergency escape windows under decks and porches

Emergency escape windows are allowed to be installed under decks and porches provided the location of the deck allows the emergency escape window to be fully opened and provides a path not less than 36 inches in height to a yard or court.