

Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings

Basements and every sleeping room shall have at least one openable emergency escape and rescue window or exterior door. Where openings are provided as a means of escape and rescue, they shall have a sill height of not more than 44” inches above the floor. (IRC R310).

Emergency escape window wells – The minimum horizontal area of the window well shall be 9 square feet, with a minimum horizontal projection and width of 36” inches. Window wells with a vertical depth greater than 44” inches shall be provided with permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with the window in the fully opened position.

Emergency escape minimum opening area – All emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet, except for grade floor openings, which may have a minimum net clear opening of 5.0 square feet. The minimum clear opening height is 24” inches and the net clear opening width is 20” inches.

Operational constraints – Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys or tools.

Emergency escape windows can 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.