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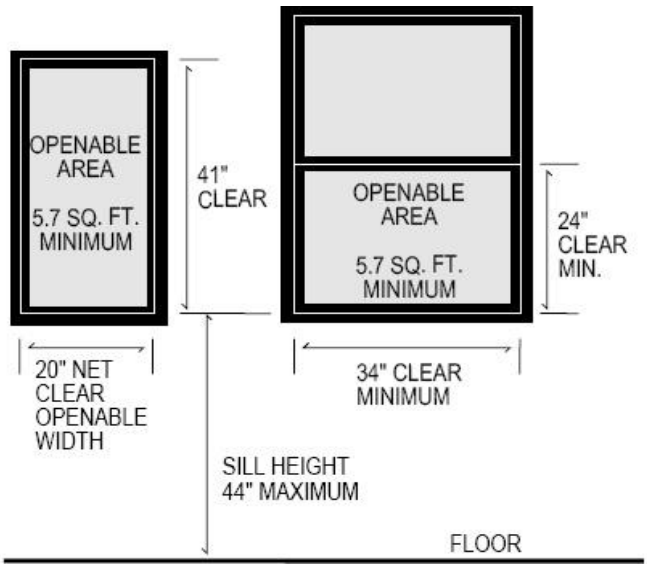
Office of Building Safety

Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings



R310.1.1 Minimum Opening Area. All emergency escape and rescue openings hall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet.
Exception: Grade floor openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5 square feet.

R310.1.2 Minimum Opening Height. The minimum net clear opening height shall be 24 inches.

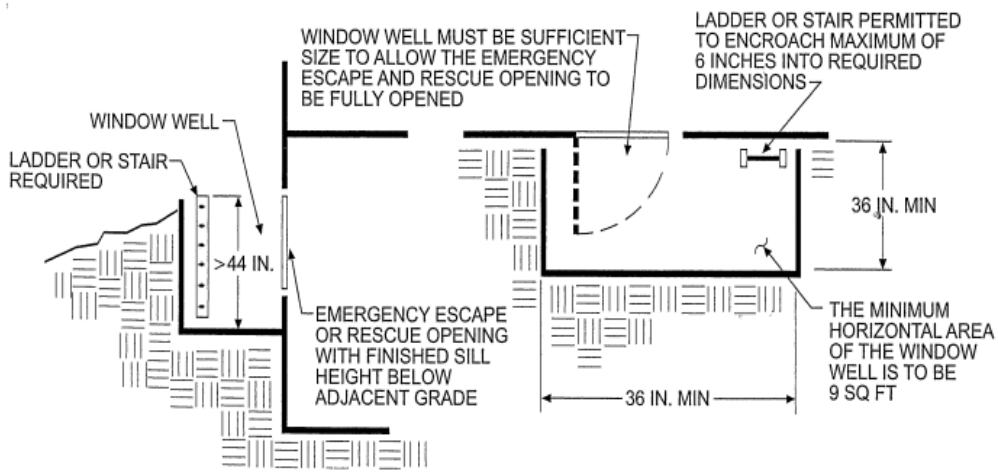
R310.1.3 Minimum Opening Width. The minimum net clear opening width shall be 20 inches.

R310.1.1 Operation Constraints and Opening Control. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge.

Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings

R310.1 Emergency Escape and Rescue Opening Required. *Basements, habitable attics* and every sleeping room shall have not less than one operable emergency escape and rescue opening. Where *basements* contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency egress and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall open directly into a public way, or to a *yard* or court that opens to a public way.
Exception: Storm shelters and *basements* used only to house mechanical *equipment* not exceeding a total floor area of 200 sqft.

R310.2.2 Window Sill Height. Where a window is provided as the emergency escape and rescue opening, it shall have a sill height of not more than 44 inches above the floor; where the sill height is below *grade*, it shall be provide with a window well in accordance with Section R 310.2.3.



For SI: 1 inch = 25.4 mm, 1 square foot = 0.0929 m².

Figure R310.2
WINDOW WELLS

R310.2.3 Window Wells. The horizontal area of the window well shall be not less than 9 square feet, with a minimum horizontal projection and width of 36 inches. The area of the window well shall allow the emergency escape and rescue opening to be fully opened.
Exception: The ladder or steps required by Section R310.2.3.1 shall be permitted to encroach not more than 6 inches into the required dimensions of the window well.

R310.2.3.1 Ladder and Steps. Window wells with a vertical depth greater than 44 inches shall be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with the window in the fully open position. Ladders or steps required by this section shall not be required to comply with Sections R311.7 and R311.8. Ladders or rungs shall have an inside width of at least 12 inches, shall project at least 3 inches from the wall and shall be spaced not more than 18 inches on center vertically for the full height of the window well.

R310.3.2 Bulkhead Enclosures. Bulkhead enclosures shall provide direct access to the basement. The bulkhead enclosure shall provide the minimum net clear opening equal to the door in the fully open position.

R310.4 Bars, Grilles, Covers and Screens. Bars, grilles, covers, screens or similar devices are permitted to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings, bulkhead enclosures, or window wells that serve such openings, provided that the minimum net clear opening size complies with Sections R310.1.1 to R310.1.3, and such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, special knowledge or force greater than that which is required for normal operation of the escape and rescue opening.