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.
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.

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.

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.

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.