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# Residential Emergency Escape and Rescue Window Requirements for 2012 IRC

**NOTE:**

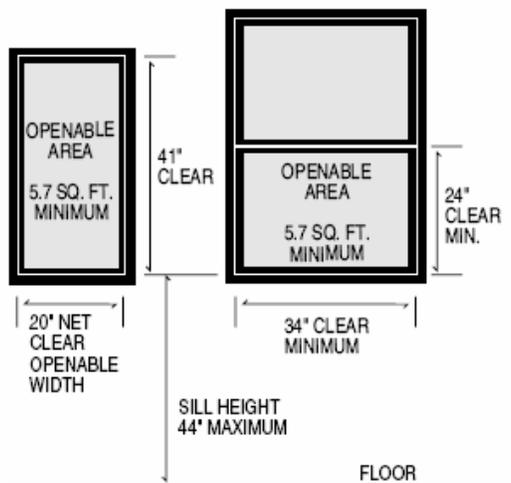
*This handout is a compilation of some of the standard requirements based on the 2012 International Residential Code for projects of this type. This information packet does not contain all of the specific codes for construction and should only be used as a guide. The permittee is responsible to meet all the code requirements applicable to each project.*

## Basement bedroom/ sleeping room requirements

Basements and every sleeping room 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 except that grade floor openings may have a net clear opening of 5.0 square feet \*\*
- Opening height not less than 24 inches.
- Opening width not less than 20 inches.
- Emergency escape windows shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys or tools.

### Minimum size for rescue/escape windows from sleeping rooms



## Emergency escape window wells below grade

### IRC Section R310.2

The 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.

Window wells with a vertical depth of more than 44 inches shall be equipped with an approved permanently affixed ladder or stairs that are accessible with the window in the fully open position. The ladder or stairs shall not encroach into the required dimensions of the window well by more than six inches. 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.

\* A minimum height clearance of 36 inches shall be maintained above the exterior grade. (Example: a deck above the escape window.)

Bars, grills, covers, screens or similar devices are permitted to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings or window wells that serve such openings provided the minimum net clear opening size complies with IRC-R310 and is 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.

\*\* Grade Floor Opening is defined per Section R202 of the 2006 I.R.C. as a window opening located such that the sill height of the opening is not more than 44" above or below the finished ground level adjacent to the opening.

Please note that for all windows, including egress windows that are on a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> story, Section R613.2 of the 2006 IRC states, “Window Sills: In dwelling units, where the opening of the operable window is located more than 72” above the finished grade or surface below, the lowest part of the clear opening of the window shall be a minimum of 24” above the finished floor of the room in which the window is located. Glazing between the floor and the 24 inches shall be fixed or have openings through which a 4” diameter sphere cannot pass.”

### Code History Requirements for Dwelling Egress Windows.

Same size window replacement is exempt from a permit. However the window must still meet the minimum fenestration value of the energy code, currently a U value of .35 is required. If the window is in a bedroom, it must meet the egress size that was required when the house was built.

First determine when the structure was built and than go to our [Washoe County Building Code Adoption History](#) to see which version of the building code was in effect. Use the chart below to determine the minimum size an egress window was required by code to be at the time the house was built.

U.B.C/I.R.C.	Section	Sill Height	Net Opening	Min. Height	Min. Width
1961	No Requirement	No Requirement	No Requirement	No Requirement	No Requirement
1964	3320	48"	5.0 Square Feet	24"	24"
1970	1404	48"	5.0 Square Feet	22"	22"
1976	1404	44"	5.7 Square Feet	24"	20"
1979 - 1991	1204	44"	5.7 Square Feet	24"	20"
1994 - 1997	310.4	44"	5.7 Square Feet	24"	20"
2003 - 2012	R310.1	44"	5.7 Square Feet	24"	20"