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Emergency Escape and Rescue Opening Requirements – 2018 IRC

CODE REQUIREMENTS

Basements, habitable attics, and every sleeping room shall have at least 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. They shall have a sill height of not more than 44 inches measured from the finished floor to the bottom of the clear opening:

- The net clear opening dimension shall be a minimum of 5.7 square feet (820.8 square inches)
- Net clear opening height shall be 24 inches minimum x 34.2 inches with to equal 5.7 square feet
- Net clear opening width shall be 20 inches minimum x 41.04 inches high to equal 5.7 square feet
- Net clear opening width shall be obtained by the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening from the inside. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools, or special knowledge.
- Grade floor openings or below grade openings shall have a net clear opening area of not less than 5 feet.

WINDOW WELL REQUIREMENTS

The area of a window well shall allow the emergency escape and rescue opening to be fully open. The minimum horizontal area of the window well shall be 9 square feet, with a minimum horizontal projection and width of 36 inches. Exception: The ladder/steps required by the IRC shall be permitted to encroach a maximum of 6 inches into the required dimensions of the window well.

LADDERS & STEPS

Window wells with a vertical depth greater than 44 inches below adjacent ground level shall be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with the window in the fully open position. Ladders or rungs shall have an inside width of at least 12 inches and shall project at least 3 inches from the wall shall be spaced not more than 18 inches on center vertically for the full height of the window well.

DRAINAGE

Window wells shall be designed for proper drainage by connecting to the building's foundation drainage system or by an approved alternative method.

BARS, GRILLS, COVERS, & SCREENS

When placed over emergency escape and rescue openings, or window wells that serve such openings, such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge or force greater than that which is required for the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening.

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 and a travel distance not to exceed 25 feet to a yard or court.