



Building Guide

ILLOWA Chapter of ICC



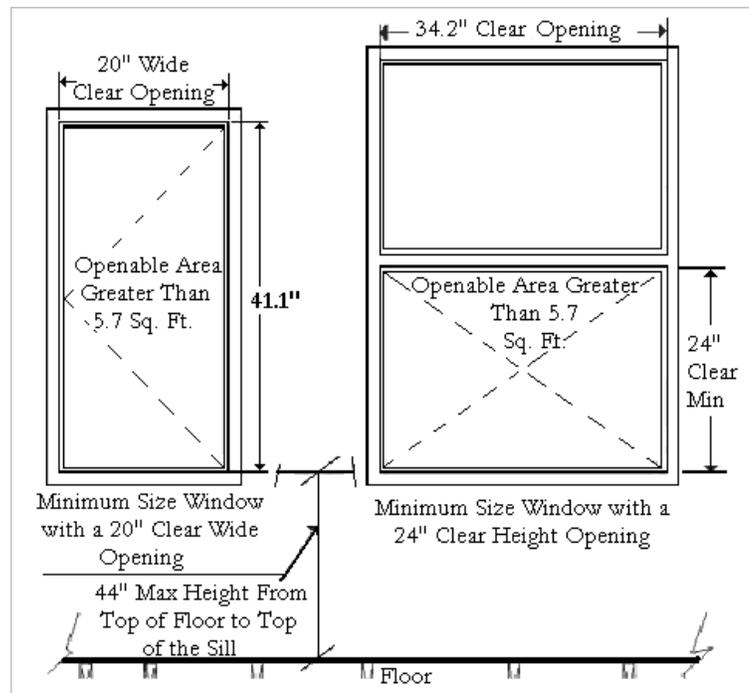
Single Family Residential Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings

All basements AND every sleeping room shall have an emergency escape and rescue opening that shall meet all of the following requirements. **Exception:** Basements not exceeding 200 square feet and used ONLY to house mechanical equipment. : (IRC 310.1)

- Maximum height from finished floor to finished sill of escape-rescue window is 44" (IRC 310.1)
- 24" minimum net clear opening height (IRC 310.1.2)
- 20" minimum net clear opening width (IRC 310.1.3)
- 5.7 ft² (821 in²) overall minimum net clear opening

Exception: Grade Floor opening shall have a minimum of 5 square feet. (IRC 310.1.1) as measured in the open position – top pane of double hung windows does NOT count towards net clear opening due to the specialized knowledge required to open. (IRC 310.1.4. See illustration)

NOTE: a step, landing, stage, box or other structure used to attempt to thwart the intent of the code by artificially reducing the distance between the finished floor and the sill height shall NOT be considered part of the finished floor.



Minimum Width/Height (W/H) requirements for Emergency Escape and Rescue Windows (in inches)

Width	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	34.2
Height	41.1	39.1	37.3	35.7	34.2	32.8	31.6	30.4	29.3	28.3	27.4	26.5	25.7	24.9	24.1	24

Bars, grilles, covers, screens or similar devices are permitted to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings provided the devices do not encroach on the minimum net openings and are releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, special knowledge or effort. (IRC 310.4) Specific security grill systems require approval by the Department of Building Safety prior to installation.

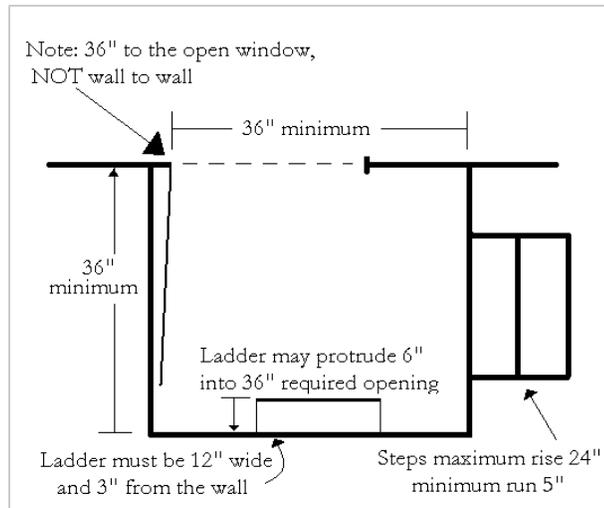
Escape and rescue windows with a finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation shall have a window well. Window wells at escape or rescue windows shall comply with IRC R310:

- The clear horizontal dimensions of the well shall allow the window to be fully opened and provide a minimum accessible net clear area of 9 square feet with a minimum dimension of 36 inches. See Illustration.

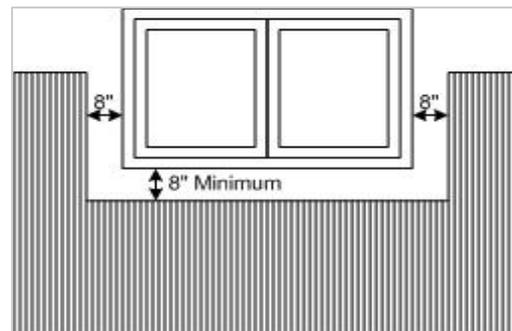
- Window wells with a vertical depth of more than 44 inches shall be equipped with an approved, permanently affixed ladder or stairs that are accessible with the window in the fully open position. (IRC 310.2.1)

If using a ladder: Ladders shall have an inside rung width a minimum of 12 inches, shall project a minimum of 3 inches from the wall and the rungs shall not be spaced further than 18 inches in center vertically. (IRC 310.2.1)

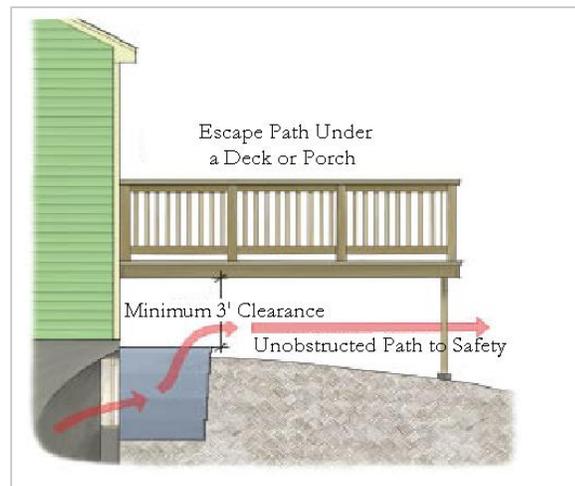
If using steps: Steps shall have a minimum tread width of 12 inches, shall have a maximum rise of 24 inches and a minimum run of 5 inches. (IRC 310.2.1 as amended) shall not encroach into the required dimension of the window well by more than 6 inches.



Window well must extend at least 8" beyond each side of the window to provide a wood/earth separation to prevent rot per (IRC 317.1.2)



Exit under a deck or porch: Emergency escape windows may be located under a deck or porch provided all other requirements are met AND the location allows for a CLEAR PATH not less than 36" in height. (IRC 310.5). A CLEAR PATH is not obstructed by an enclosure or latticework.



NOTE: A permit to install an egress window in no way allows creation of an additional dwelling unit, nor does it make a basement bedroom legal that was built without a permit. Additional permits are required for other modifications to the basement, for example, to finish a room, add a bedroom, or to add a dwelling unit.

DISCLAIMER: ILLOWA Chapter of the ICC has created this handout to assist with plans submittal under the 2009 International Residential Code, and it is not intended to cover all circumstances. Please check with the Department of Building Safety for additional requirements.