



Emergency Escape, Egress Windows and Rescue Openings

Community Development Department - Construction Permits and Inspection Services
 215 Sycamore St Muscatine, IA 52761 - PH 563.262.4141 - FAX 563.262.4142
www.muscatineiowa.gov/26/Community-Development

2015 International Residential Code

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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)

◇ **Sill height:**

The sill height shall not be more than **44 inches** above the floor.

◇ **Minimum opening area:**

The minimum net clear opening shall be **5.7 square ft.**
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)

◇ **Minimum opening height:**

The minimum net clear opening height shall be **24 inches.**

◇ **Minimum opening width:**

The minimum net clear opening width shall be **20 inches.**

◇ **Operation:**

The net clear opening dimensions shall be obtained by **normal operation** from the inside. Openings shall also be operational from inside without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge.

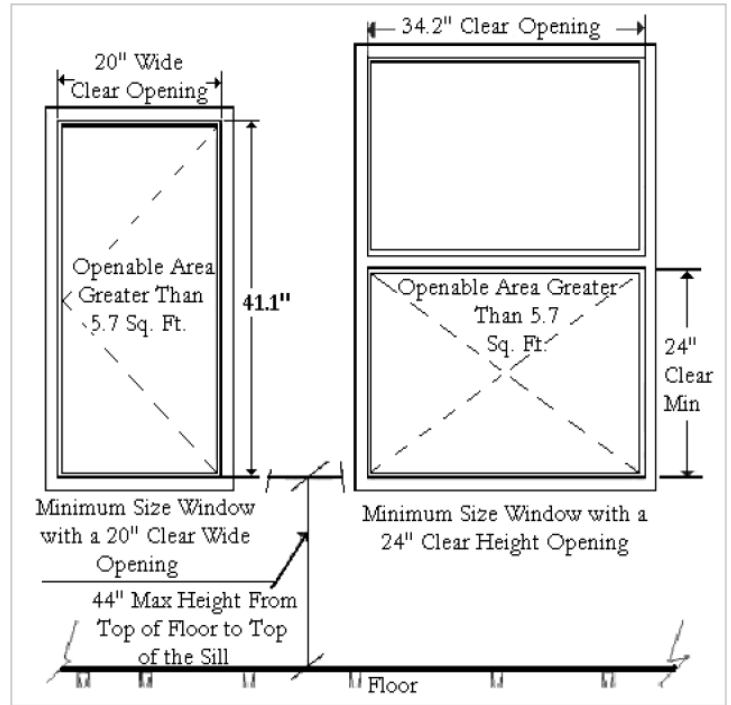
◇ **Direct to outside:**

Must open directly to a yard or court.
 See exception next page.

◇ **Window Well:**

A finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation requires a window well.

◇ Windows that require operational constraints due to fall protection required by R312 may be equipped with opening control devices that comply with ASTM F 2090. (R310.1.1)



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 Community Development Department prior to installation.



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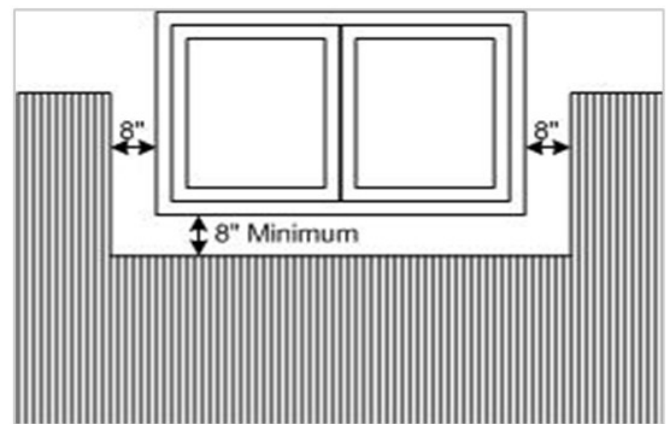
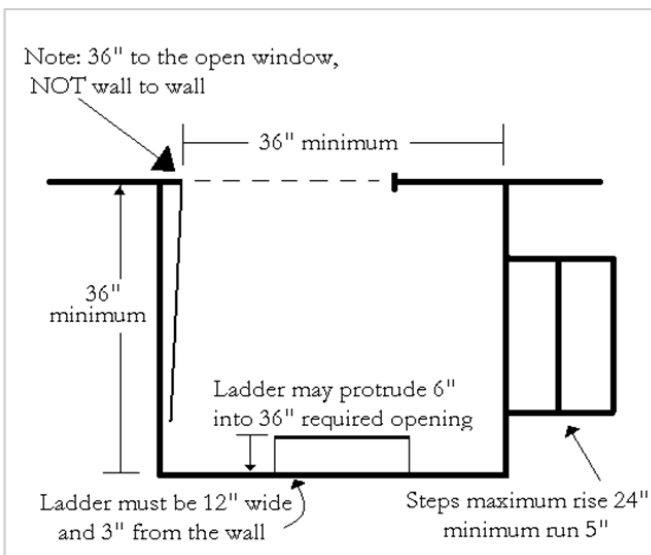
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Below Grade: Escape and rescue windows with a finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation shall have a window well. Window wells at escape or rescue windows shall comply with IRC R310:

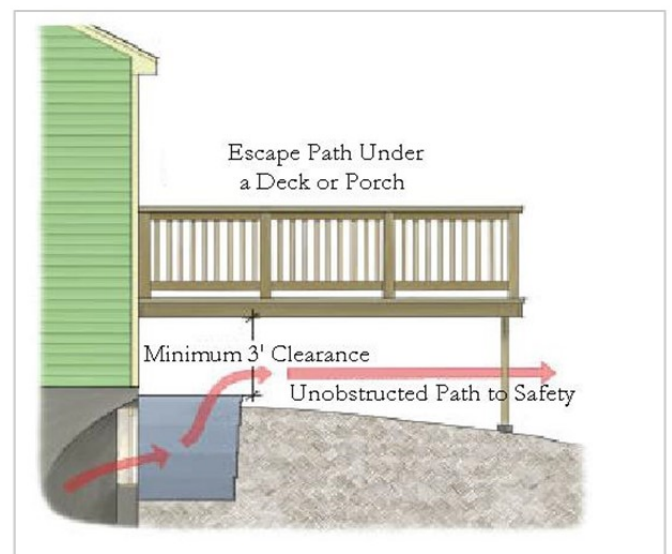
- ◆ The clear horizontal dimensions of the well shall allow the window to be fully opened and provide a minimum accessible net clear area of 9 square feet with a minimum dimension of 36 inches. See illustration.
- ◆ Window wells with a vertical depth of more than 44 inches shall be equipped with an approved, permanently affixed ladder or stairs that are accessible with the window in the fully open position. (IRC 310.2.1)



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)

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.



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