



Fire Egress Emergency Escape Rescue Openings

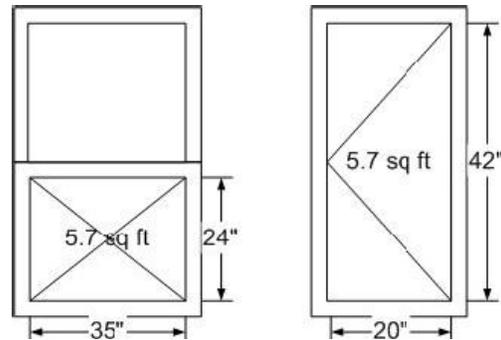
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Many homeowners and homebuyers are confused about fire egress windows and whether or not they are required. According to the Minnesota Building Code they may or may not be required depending on the age of the house and whether any remodeling or additions have taken place. However, regardless of what the Code may or may not say, the intent is really quite simple – do occupants in the home have adequate means of escape during an emergency?

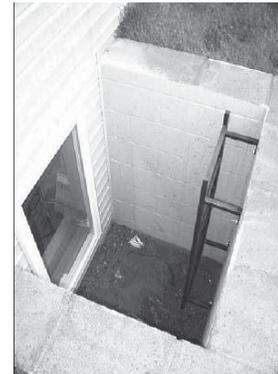
Emergency escape and rescue openings

According to the Minnesota Building Code basements and every sleeping room shall have at least one operable emergency and rescue opening. Such opening shall open directly into a public street, public alley, yard or court. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency egress and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room, but shall not be required in adjoining areas of the basement. Where emergency escape and rescue openings are provided, they shall have: *sill height of not more than 44 inches above the floor; Minimum width 20"; Minimum height 24"; Minimum total opening size 5.7 square feet (820 sq in).* Be aware that minimum width or height must be exceeded to achieve 5.7 sq ft.



Window wells

The minimum opening size shall be 36" x 36". Minimum opening size with window open is 30". A ladder must be provided if 44" or more in height. The ladder may be within the 36" minimum size up to 6" maximum depth as long as it does not impede window operation.



A special note regarding guards around windows

The Minnesota State Building Code does **not** specify requirements for guards around window wells to keep persons from falling into them, falls can and do occur. Because of the variations in the size, location and depth of window wells and since a guard could present an impediment to escape or rescue, the code is silent. The potential for falls into a window well should be evaluated by the homeowner and suitable guards or visual barriers provided based on the location, depth and size of the well. Barriers, guards or covers installed to prevent falls must be placed in such a way that does not impede use of the window well for escape and rescue. If covers are used, the effects of snow on the ability to open or remove them in an emergency must also be evaluated.

Drainage

Surrounding landscape must slope downhill away from the window well. Nearby downspouts, sump discharge and hose faucets should be directed away from the window well. Soil at the base of the window well must slope downhill away from the window and have minimum 6" clearance to wood window or framing components.

Egress Window Replacement

The International Residential Code (IRC) requires that all new bedrooms must have windows that meet egress requirements but the rules are not retroactive to windows in existing bedrooms unless you replace those windows. If you are replacing a window in an existing bedroom, the new window is not required to meet new egress requirements if the replacement window meets the following conditions:

1. The existing height and width net clear opening shall not be reduced by more than 2 inches (51 mm) in either dimension;
2. The rooms or areas are not used for any Minnesota state licensed purpose;
3. The window is not required pursuant to the Minnesota Fire Code;
4. The sleeping room is not undergoing an addition, remodeling, or a change in occupancy; and
5. The window is not required to be replaced pursuant to a locally adopted housing, property maintenance, or rental licensing code.

If you are replacing a bedroom window and you are increasing the size of the rough opening of the window, the new window must meet current egress requirements.

If you are replacing double hung windows and unable to meet the minimum required size, consider changing to casement windows.

Calculating open area for window in square feet

Height	Width																
	20"	21"	22"	23"	24"	25"	26"	27"	28"	29"	30"	31"	32"	33"	34"	35"	36"
24"	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.7	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.7	5.8	6.0
26"	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.7	4.9	5.1	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.1	6.3	6.5
28"	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.7	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.0
30"	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.9	7.1	7.3	7.5
32"	4.4	4.7	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.7	6.9	7.1	7.3	7.6	7.8	8.0
34"	4.7	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.1	7.3	7.6	7.8	8.0	8.3	8.5
36"	5.0	5.3	5.5	5.8	6.0	6.3	6.5	6.8	7.0	7.3	7.5	7.8	8.0	8.3	8.5	8.8	9.0
38"	5.3	5.5	5.8	6.1	6.3	6.6	6.9	7.1	7.4	7.7	7.9	8.2	8.4	8.7	9.0	9.2	9.5
40"	5.6	5.8	6.1	6.4	6.7	6.9	7.2	7.5	7.8	8.1	8.3	8.6	8.9	9.2	9.4	9.7	10.0
42"	5.8	6.1	6.4	6.7	7.0	7.3	7.6	7.9	8.2	8.5	8.8	9.0	9.3	9.6	9.9	10.2	10.5
44"	6.1	6.4	6.7	7.0	7.3	7.6	7.9	8.3	8.6	8.9	9.2	9.5	9.8	10.1	10.4	10.7	11.0
46"	6.4	6.7	7.0	7.3	7.7	8.0	8.3	8.6	8.9	9.3	9.6	10.0	10.2	10.5	10.9	11.2	11.5
48"	6.7	7.0	7.3	7.7	8.0	8.3	8.7	9.0	9.3	9.7	10.0	10.3	10.7	11.0	11.3	11.7	12.0
50"	6.9	7.3	7.6	8.0	8.3	8.7	9.0	9.4	9.7	10.1	10.4	10.8	11.1	11.5	11.8	12.2	12.5
52"	7.2	7.6	7.9	8.3	8.7	9.0	9.4	9.8	10.1	10.5	10.8	11.2	11.6	11.9	12.3	12.6	13.0
54"	7.5	7.9	8.3	8.6	9.0	9.4	9.8	10.1	10.5	10.9	11.3	11.6	12.0	12.4	12.8	13.1	13.5
56"	7.8	8.2	8.6	8.9	9.3	9.7	10.1	10.5	10.9	11.3	11.7	12.1	12.4	12.8	13.2	13.6	14.0
58"	8.0	8.5	8.9	9.3	9.7	10.1	10.5	10.9	11.3	11.7	12.1	12.5	12.9	13.3	13.7	14.1	14.5
60"	8.3	8.8	9.2	9.6	10.0	10.4	10.8	11.3	11.7	12.1	12.5	12.9	13.3	13.8	14.2	14.6	15.0