



INFORMATION BULLETIN

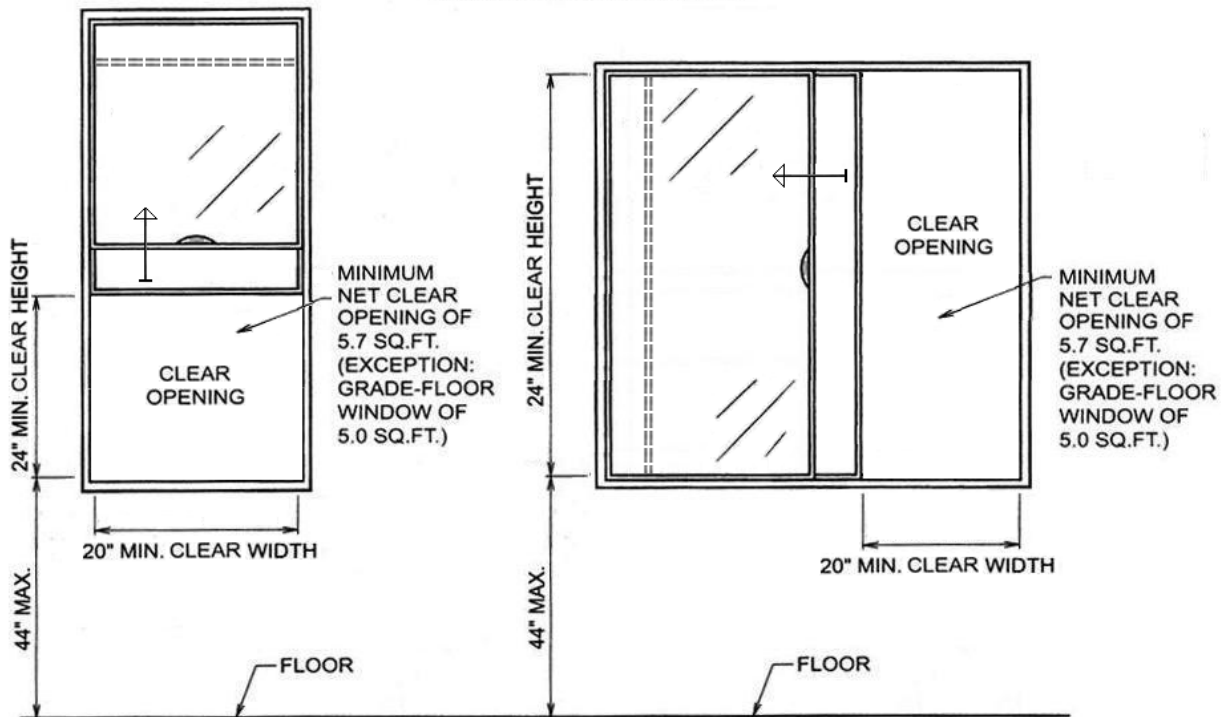
**IB-006**

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**Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings**

The purpose of this Information Bulletin (IB) is to assist designers and owners to understand the specific emergency escape and rescue opening provision of the 2019 Edition of the California Residential Code (CRC). The requirement for emergency escape and rescue openings to one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories above grade plane in height is intended to address the spread of fire in rooms where occupants are typically asleep and unaware of the impending fire and the normal exit channels may be blocked. This provision requires emergency escape and rescue openings (i.e., windows or doors) on the exterior of buildings where occupants may be sleeping during a potential fire buildup. The dimensional criteria and operational constraints of the openings are intended to permit fire service personnel, usually in full protective clothing and rescue equipment, to enter with minimal delay or obstruction, as well as permit all occupants within the building or facility to escape.

Pursuant to CRC §R310.1, basements, habitable attics and every sleeping room shall have not less than one operable emergency escape and rescue opening. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, an emergency escape and rescue opening shall be required in each sleeping room. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall open directly into a public way, or to a yard or court that opens to a public way. See figure below for illustration.



**FIGURE: EMERGENCY ESCAPE WINDOW**

Dimensional criteria and operational constraints for emergency escape and rescue openings are provided as follows:

**Minimum opening area.** Pursuant to CRC §R310.2.1, emergency and escape rescue openings shall have a net clear opening of not less than 5.7 square feet, except grade floor openings or below-grade openings shall be permitted to have a net clear opening area of not less than 5 square feet. The net clear opening dimensions shall be obtained by the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening from the inside. The net clear height of the opening shall be not less than 24 inches and the net clear width shall be not less than 20 inches.

**Window sill height.** Pursuant to CRC §R310.2.2, where a window is provided as the emergency escape and rescue opening, it shall have the bottom of the clear opening not greater than 44 inches measured from the floor; where the sill height is below grade, it shall be provided with a window well in accordance with CRC §R310.2.3.

**Operational constraints and opening control devices.** Pursuant to CRC §R310.1.1, emergency escape and rescue openings shall be maintained free of any obstructions other than those allowed by this section and shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge. Window opening control devices on windows serving as a required emergency escape and rescue opening shall comply with ASTM F2090.

**Bars, grilles, covers and screens.** Pursuant to CRC §R310.4, where bars, grilles, covers, screens or similar devices are placed over emergency escape and rescue openings, area wells, or window wells, the minimum net clear opening size shall comply with CRC §R310.2.1 through §R310.2.3, and such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, special knowledge or force greater than that required for the normal operation of the escape and rescue opening. The release mechanism shall be maintained operable at all times.

**Tables with minimum clear width and height dimensions for emergency escape window.** The following tables below are intended to assist designers and owners meet the minimum clear height and clear width dimensions necessary to achieve the required 5.7 square feet opening per Table 1 or 5.0 square feet opening per Table 2.

**Table 1 (5.7 sq. ft.)**

<b>Min. Width</b>	20.0	20.5	21.0	21.5	22.0	22.5	23.0	23.5	24.0	24.5	25.0	25.5	26.0	26.5	27.0
<b>Min. Height</b>	41.1	40.1	39.1	38.2	37.3	36.5	35.7	35.0	34.2	33.5	32.9	32.2	31.6	31.0	30.4
<b>Min. Width</b>	27.5	28.0	28.5	29.0	29.5	30.0	30.5	31.0	31.5	32.0	32.5	33.0	33.5	34.0	34.2
<b>Min. Height</b>	29.9	29.4	28.8	28.3	27.9	27.4	27.0	26.5	26.1	25.7	25.3	24.9	24.5	24.2	24.0

FOOTNOTE: Dimensions are in inches.

**Table 2 (5.0 sq. ft.)**

<b>Min. Width</b>	20.0	20.5	21.0	21.5	22.0	22.5	23.0	23.5	24.0	24.5	25.0	25.5	26.0	26.5	27.0
<b>Min. Height</b>	36.0	35.2	34.3	33.5	32.8	32.0	31.4	30.7	30.0	29.4	28.8	28.3	27.7	27.2	26.7
<b>Min. Width</b>	27.5	28.0	28.5	29.0	29.5	30.0									
<b>Min. Height</b>	26.2	25.8	25.3	24.9	24.5	24.0									

FOOTNOTE: Dimensions are in inches.

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