



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 emergency escape and rescue opening provision of the current California Residential Code (CRC). The CRC requirement for emergency escape and rescue openings in detached one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories above the 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 paths may be blocked. This provision requires emergency escape and rescue openings (i.e., windows or doors) in the exterior wall of rooms and areas of buildings where occupants may be sleeping during a potential fire. The dimensional criteria and operational constraints of the openings are intended to permit fire service personnel in full protective clothing and rescue equipment to enter with minimal delay or obstruction, as well as permit occupants within the building to escape.

According 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.

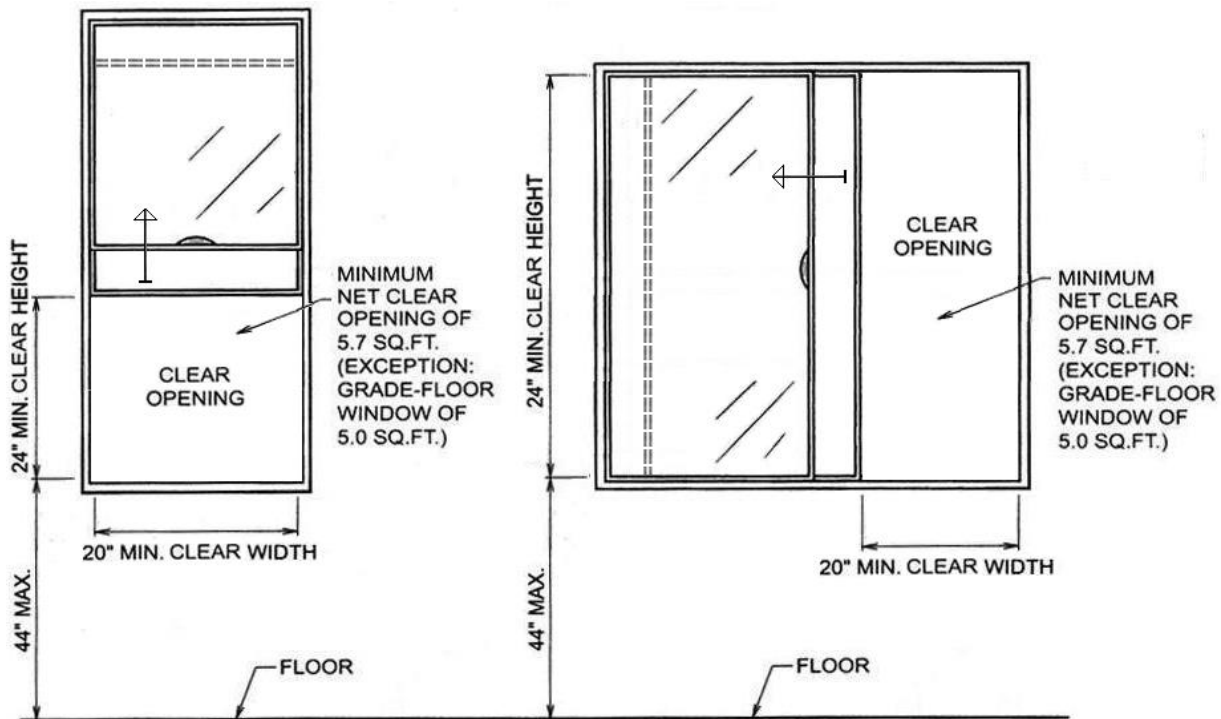


FIGURE 1

EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE WINDOW OPENINGS

DIMENSIONAL CRITERIA

Minimum Opening Area and Clear Dimensions. 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 may be not less than 5 square feet. The minimum net clear opening height shall be 24 inches. The minimum net clear opening width shall be 20 inches. The dimensions shall be measured from inside the building during normal window operation. See Figure 1 above for illustration.

Window Sill Height. The bottom of the clear opening shall not be greater than 44 inches above the floor. Where the bottom of the clear opening is below the adjacent grade the opening shall be provided with an area well complying with CRC R310.4.1 through R310.4.4. See Figure 1 above for illustration.

Minimum Area Tables. The following tables are to assist designers and owners in choosing window sizes that achieve the required minimum opening area and clear dimensions. Most manufacturer's specify which of their windows meet the opening area requirements.

TABLE 1

OPENINGS (5.7 SQUARE FEET)

Min. Width	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
Min. Height	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
Min. Width	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
Min. Height	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.

OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Emergency Escape and Rescue Doors. Where a door is provided as the required emergency escape and rescue opening, it shall be a side-hinged or a sliding door.

Operational Constraints and Opening Control Devices. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge maintained and free of any obstructions not allowed by R310. Window opening control and fall prevention devices shall be not more than 70 inches above the finished floor and shall be maintained operable at all times.

Bars, grilles, covers and screens. Where bars, grilles, covers, screens or similar devices are placed over emergency escape and rescue openings, bulkhead enclosures or area wells that serve such openings, the minimum net clear opening size shall comply with CRC Sections R310.2 through R310.2.2 and R310.4.1. Such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key or tool or force greater than that required for the normal operation of the opening and shall be maintained operable at all times.

REPLACEMENT WINDOWS FOR EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE OPENINGS

Per CRC R310.5 replacement windows installed in existing openings are not required to comply with the minimum dimensions and sill height requirements, provided the replacement windows are the manufacturer's largest standard size window that will fit within the existing frame or existing rough opening and the same operating style or a style that provides for an equal or greater window opening area than the existing window.

To request this information in an alternative format or to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Community Development Department at longbeach.gov/lbcd and 562.570.3807. A minimum of three business days is requested to ensure availability; attempts will be made to accommodate requests with shorter notice.