



Egress Windows

Permits

Permits are required for the installation of egress windows. Along with the completed permit application, please submit a drawing that shows where in the house the egress window will be installed, the current window dimensions (if there is one), the dimensions of the new window, any header information, and dimensions of the proposed window well. Inspections are required for the work being done; which typically include framing, insulation, and final inspections. The inspector will make note of the required inspections on the permit.

When is an Egress Window Required

The Minnesota State Building Code requires that sleeping rooms and habitable space in basement dwelling units have windows or doors which may be used for emergency escape or rescue. Egress windows are required in all sleeping rooms located in basements.

Window Requirements

Egress windows and doors must be located on the exterior of the building and open directly to a yard, street, or alley so that the occupants may escape or be rescued directly from the room to the outside without having to travel through the building itself. Egress window openings with a finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation shall be provided with a window well in accordance with Section R310.2. A minimum ceiling height of 48 inches shall be maintained above the exterior grade from the exterior wall to a public way.

- Minimum opening area: All emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet. Exception: Grade floor openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5 square feet.
- 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.
- Operational constraints: Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys or tools.

Replacement Window

Replacement windows installed in buildings meeting the scope of the International Residential code shall be exempt from the requirements of Section R310.1.1, R310.1.2, and R310.1.3 if the replacement window meets the following conditions:

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



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Window Wells

Window wells required for emergency escape and rescue shall have horizontal dimensions that allow the door or window of the emergency escape and rescue openings to be fully opened. The horizontal dimensions of the window well shall provide a minimum net clear area of 9 square feet with a minimum horizontal projection and width of 36 inches. Exception: the ladder or steps required by Section R310.2.1 shall be permitted to encroach a maximum of 6 inches into the required dimensions of the window well.

Ladder and Steps

Window wells with a vertical depth greater than 44 inches below the adjacent ground level shall be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with window in the fully opened position. Ladders or steps required by this section shall not be required to comply with section R314 and R315. Ladders or rungs shall have an inside width of at least 12 inches, shall be spaced not more than 18 inches on center vertically for the full height of the window well.

Guard

The code does not specify requirements for guards around window wells. If a guard is utilized, ensure the use of a guard does not hinder the functionality of the egress window. The effects of snow on the ability to open or remove the guard in an emergency must also be evaluated.