

## EMERGENCY ESCAPE & RESCUE OPENINGS

This handout is intended only as a guide and is based in part on the 2020 Minnesota State Building Code, the 2020 Minnesota State Fire code and the City of Owatonna ordinances, and good building practice. While every attempt has been made to insure the correctness of this handout, no guarantees are made to its accuracy or completeness. Responsibility for compliance with applicable codes and ordinances falls on the owner or contractor. For specific questions regarding code requirements, refer to the applicable codes or contact your local Building Department.

### Permit

A permit is required when adding emergency escape and rescue window.

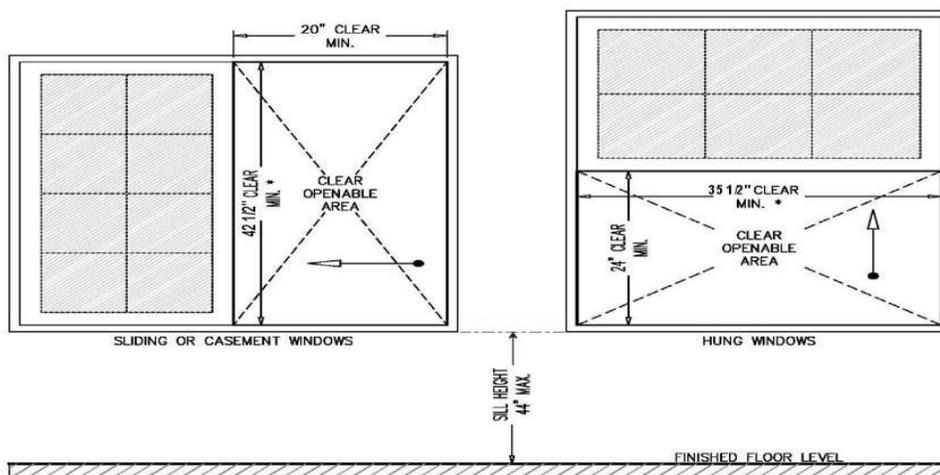
### Pre-inspection

A pre-inspection for the installation of emergency escape and rescue window or replacement is required to ensure compliance with the code. A Building Inspector must have access to the interior of the living unit to evaluate the proposed new installations. The major reasons for this inspection are the life safety of occupants for emergency escape and Fire Department rescue access.

### Window Opening Dimensions

Newly installed egress windows shall meet all the following requirements: [R310.2.1](#)

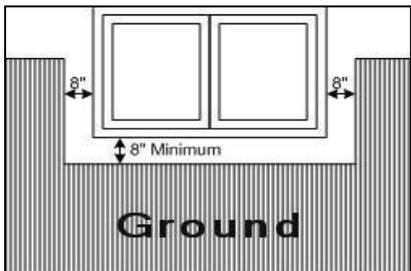
- 5.7 sq. ft (820 sq. inches) overall minimum net clear opening (measured in the open position – see illustration)
- 20" minimum net clear opening width x a height to equal 5.7 sq. ft (820sq inches) minimum.
- 24" minimum net clear opening height x a width to equal 5.7 sq. ft (820sq inches) minimum.
- Maximum height from finished floor to finished sill of escape-rescue window is 44"



## Bars, Grills & Gates

Bars, grilles, grates or similar devices may be installed on emergency escape windows, doors or window wells, provided:

- The devices are equipped with approved release mechanisms which are open-able from the inside without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort [R310.4](#); and
- The building is equipped with smoke detectors installed in accordance with IRC section. [R314](#)
- Specific security grill systems require approval by the Department of Inspections prior to installation.

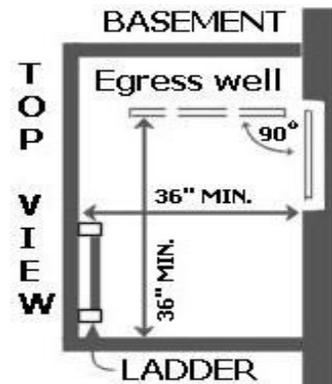


### Decay Resistance

Window well must extend at least 8" beyond each side of the window to provide a wood/earth separation to prevent rot per IRC section [R317.1](#)

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 [R310.2.3](#):

- The clear horizontal dimensions shall allow the window to be fully opened and provide a minimum accessible net clear opening of 9 square feet with a minimum dimension of 36 inches in each direction.
- 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. The ladder or stairs shall not encroach into the required dimension of the window well by more than 6 inches. [R310.2.3.1](#)



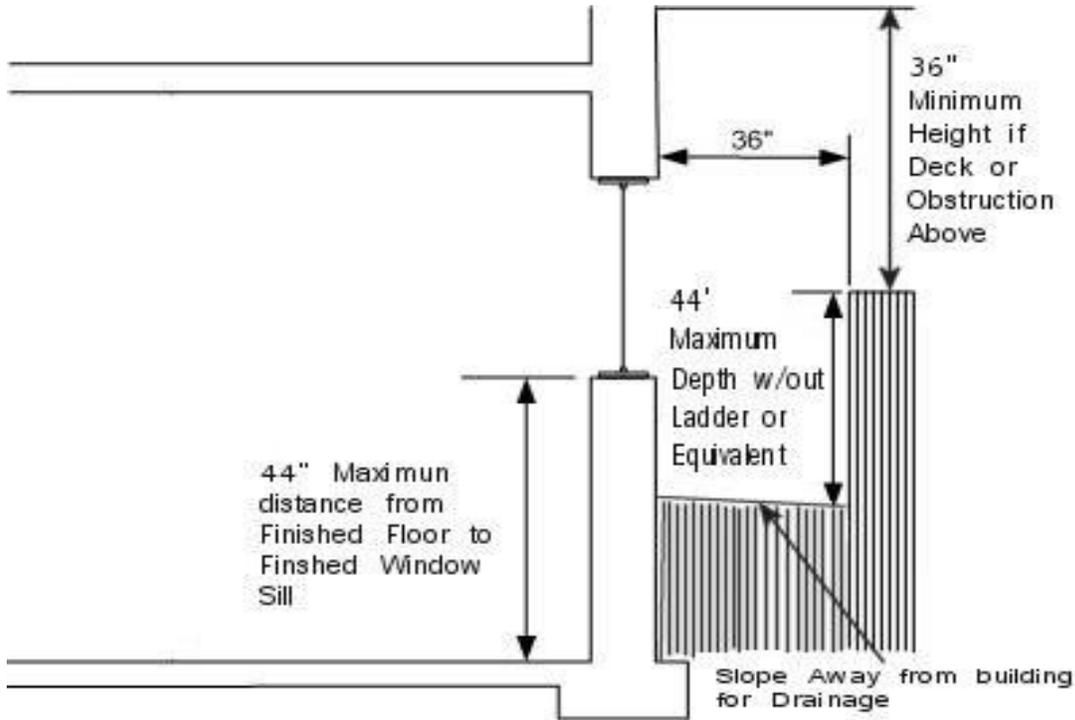
### Legal Escape Ladder

- Ladders or rungs shall have an inside width of at least 12 inches,
- shall project at least 3 inches from the wall and
- shall be spaced not more than 18 inches on center vertically for the full height of the window well.
- Permanently affixed. [R310.2.3.1](#)





# Side Elevation View Best Practices



**NOTE:** A permit to install an egress window in no way allows creation of an additional dwelling unit, nor does it make a basement bedroom legal that was built without a permit. Additional permits are required for other modifications to the basement, for example, to finish a room, add a bedroom, or to add a dwelling unit.

