

Definition

An **emergency escape and rescue opening** is an operable window, door, or similar device that provides for a means of escape and access for rescue in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Escape Window vs. Means of Egress

An emergency escape window or rescue opening is a specific type of window designed for emergency escape and rescue, while means of egress refers to the overall system of pathways and exits used to evacuate a building.

Operational Constraints

Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys or tools.

Bars, grilles, insect screens, or similar devices are permitted to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings provided such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, or force greater than which is required for the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening.

Disclaimer

This publication is intended to be a guide to assist in answering general inquiries. This publication does not include all aspects of the relevant codes. Code requirements vary depending on numerous factors. For specific questions, please contact our office.

Permits

Permits are required for constructing, enlarging, altering, repairs, moving demolishing or changing the occupancy of a structure. All electrical, heating, and plumbing work is to be completed by licensed contractors under permit. Applications for permits may be obtained through the Permits office on the 3rd floor of City Hall. Questions about permits call 301-739-8577 Ext. 123 or email permits@hagerstownmd.org

Phone: 301-739-8577, Ext. 103

Fax: 301-791-2650

Email: codecompliance@hagerstownmd.org

April 2025



Department of Housing & Community Development
One East Franklin Street, Suite 300
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Emergency Escape



Requirements



1 E. Franklin St. Suite 300
Hagerstown, MD 21740

301-739-8577 Ext. 103

EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE OPENINGS

EMERGENCY ESCAPE WINDOWS

Minimum Height

24 inches of openable area

Minimum Width

20 inches of openable area

Maximum Height from Floor

44 inches above the floor

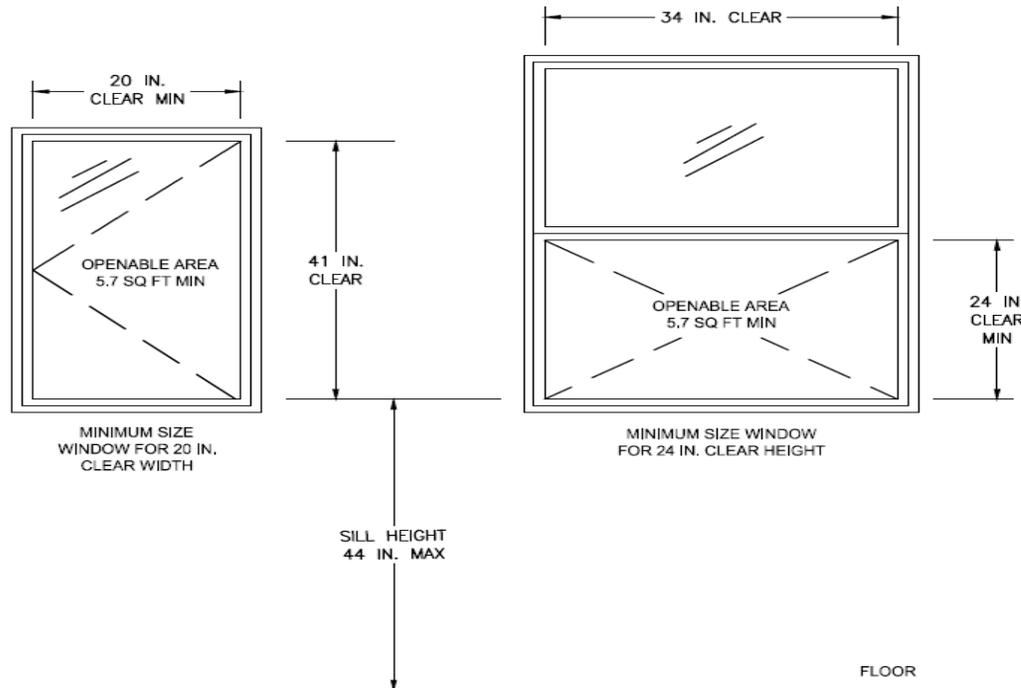
Minimum Openable Area

5 sq. ft. if at grade

5.7 sq. ft. if above or below grade

The openable area must be obtained through normal operation of the windows.

Tilting or removal of sashes is **NOT** normal operation.



Every sleeping room located at or below the third story must have an emergency escape and rescue opening. This opening must open directly to the exterior of the building.

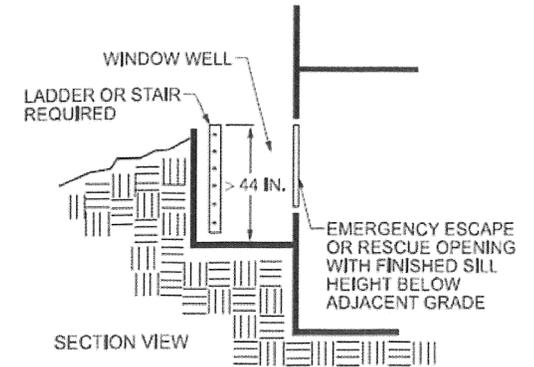
Emergency Escape

Window Wells

If the window well is over 44 inches deep, then ladders or stairs are required.

Ladders or stairs can encroach 6 inches maximum into the window well and must project at least 3 inches. Ladders must be 12 inches wide.

The ladders or stairs must be permanently attached and not more than 18 inches on center vertically for steps.



The minimum horizontal area of the window well must be 9 sq. ft.

The minimum dimension is 36 inches by 36 inches.

The emergency escape and rescue opening must be allowed to open fully.

