



City of Urbandale
3600 86th Street
Urbandale, IA 50322-4057
www.urbandale.org
Building Department (515) 278-3935



Emergency Escape Window Requirements

Required Inspections

1. **Framing** – Inspection of rough opening and any structural framing.
2. **Final Inspection** – Please schedule once work has been completed to close permit.

Design

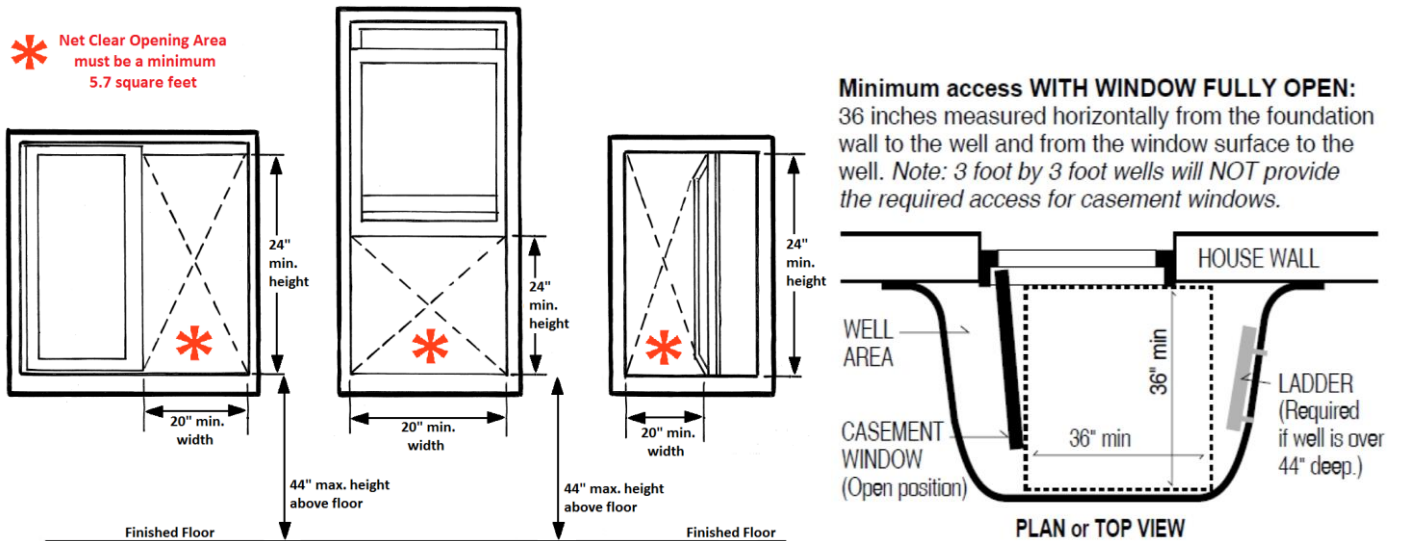
- An emergency escape window is required in basements, habitable attics, and every bedroom. Where basements contain more than one bedroom an egress window is required for each bedroom. R310.1
Exception – dwellings equipped automatic sprinklers shall not be required, provided the basement has a means of egress per R311.
- If the installation of the window affects structural loading, information such as the number of stories supported and the lengths of floor joists bearing upon the wall would need to be submitted for review. R106.1
- Wood in contact with concrete needs to be decay resistant material. R317.1
- Windows must be operable from the inside without the use of keys, tools, or special knowledge. R310.1.1
- Emergency escape windows installed under decks are required to allow the window to be fully opened and provide a path not less than 36 in. in height to a yard. R310.2.4

Window Dimensions

- Clear opening width is 20 in. minimum and clear opening height is 24 in. minimum. R310.2.1
- Net clear opening is 5.7 square feet minimum (821 square inches) R310.2.1
- Grade level and basement level openings may be reduced to have a minimum net clear opening of 5 square feet.
- Sill height of 44 in maximum is measured from the clear opening to the finished floor. In basements, maximum sill height may be measured from an elevated landing not less than 36in. wide and not less than 20in. out from the exterior wall. The maximum height of the elevated landing is 24 in., and the landing should be securely affixed to the floor. R310.2.2 & Muni Code 150.03 [B] 21
- Existing window openings dwelling units that were constructed prior to December 27, 1979 are not required to comply with the current minimum clear opening dimensions and maximum sill height requirements of this Code, but every such noncompliant emergency escape opening shall have clear and unobstructed width and height dimensions that are a minimum of 18 in. in each direction of a rectangular shape, and the finished sill height of every such escape opening shall not be more than 48 in. above the floor elevation below such opening.
Muni Code 150.03 [Y]

Window must meet all 3 requirements – see page 2 for illustration.

- 1. Width 20in.
- 2. Height 24in.
- 3. Area 5.7 sq. ft. (basement & grade level) may be reduced to 5 sq. ft.



Window Wells

- A window well must be a minimum 36in. X 36in. For casement windows, this dimension is measured with the window in the open position. R310.2.3
- Window wells must be designed for proper drainage by connecting to the buildings foundation drainage system or by an approved alternate method. R310.2.3.2

Bars, grills, covers and screens

- Bars, grills, covers, screens, or similar devices are permitted to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings, or window wells that serve such openings if the minimum opening dimensions are still met. Such devices must be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, special knowledge, or force greater than the normal operation of the escape and rescue opening. R310.4

Smoke detectors and Carbon Monoxide devices

- The code requires smoke detectors or combination type smoke detectors to be installed in all bedrooms, on all floors/levels of the house, and in the hallways accessing each sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms. R314.1 & IAC 661.210.1
- A carbon monoxide detector is required to be installed outside each separate sleeping area and within bedrooms with a fuel-burning appliance. R315
- Both smoke and carbon devices must be interconnected by either hardwire or wireless technology
- See [Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Handout](#) for more details.

Ladders

- Window wells with a vertical depth greater than 44 in. must be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with the window in the fully open position. R310.2.3.1
- Ladders or rungs must have an inside width of at least 12 in., should project at least 3 in. from the wall, and cannot be spaced more than 18 in. on center vertically for the full height of the window well. R310.2.3.1