INSPECTION DEPARTMENT
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CITY OF JAMESTOWN

Egress Windows
For Single Family Dwellings

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

The State of North Dakota requires that you call 811 at least two business days before you dig.

This handout does not address any covenants or easements assigned to the property, nor does it relieve you of code compliance with items that may have not been included from the International Residential Code (IRC).

**The City Inspection Department requires a Building Permit for Egress window installation.

POLICY ON EGRESS WINDOW REQUIREMENTS PERTINENT TO REMODELING OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

1. Windows in existence are presumed to have met the building code requirements at the time of their installation.

2. Replacements of windows with windows of the same size and style (openable area) may be accomplished without requiring that the present day egress window requirements be met. This statement is based on International Residential Code, which allows for maintenance of existing buildings.

3. Windows which are to be replaced in bedrooms in a rough opening that is changed in any way or with a different style of window must comply with the requirements for an egress window.

4. Windows in any room which are to be replaced with windows which will required a larger rough opening will be required to be replaced with windows meeting the present day requirements for natural light and ventilation.

5. Windows which are to be replaced with windows which will have a smaller openable area will not be permitted unless the new windows will comply with the currently adopted code for natural light and ventilation.

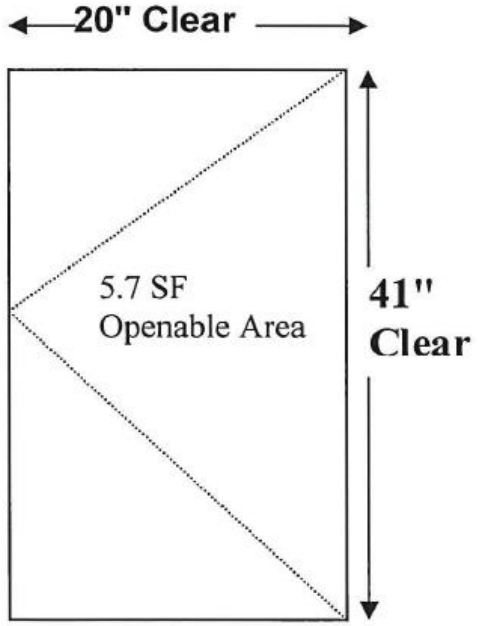
6. In all cases where window replacement is anticipated which might be affected by this policy, the owner or owner's representative will be advised by the permit issuer that egress windows are strongly recommended even though they might not be required in their specific project.

7. Windows discovered in residential projects permitted since the adoption of the 1988 edition of the building code which do not comply with the egress window requirements will, without exception, be required to be changed to complying windows.

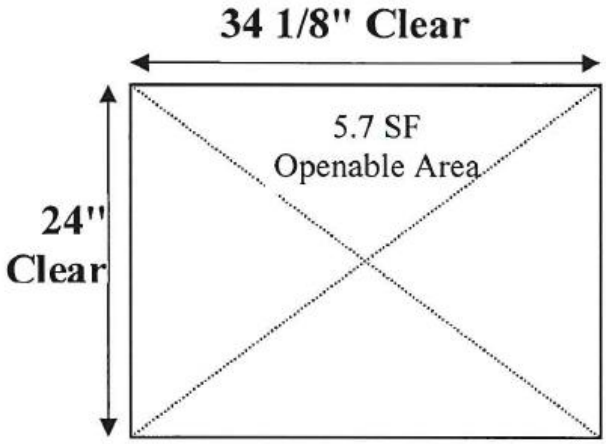
Following, you will find the specific requirements for windows that will comply with the code requirements for emergency escape and rescue openings. Remember that these windows aren't just meant for escape! The minimum sizes have been calculated to accommodate a full-grown firefighter with all of his or her equipment.

R310.1 Emergency escape and rescue required. 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.

R310.2.1 Minimum opening area. Emergency and escape rescue openings shall have a net clear opening of not less than 5.7 square feet (0.530 m^2). The net clear opening dimensions required by this section shall be obtained by the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening from the inside. The net clear height opening shall be not less than 24 inches (610 mm) and the net clear width shall be not less than 20 inches (508 mm).
Exception: Grade floor or below grade openings shall have a net clear opening of not less than 5 square feet (0.465 m^2).



Minimum size window for 20" clear width



Minimum size window for 24" clear width

Figuring Out if Your New Window Complies

The minimum width of the openable area of an egress window is 20" (where the chart begins) and the minimum height is 24" (where the chart ends). These dimensions are measured with the window fully open and only include the space you can freely pass through, not the sill, jambs, hardware, or the window itself.

Obviously, meeting only the minimums will not result in a window of 5.7 square feet. The following chart will help you determine whether the window you want to install will comply with egress requirements. All of these measurements are in inches.

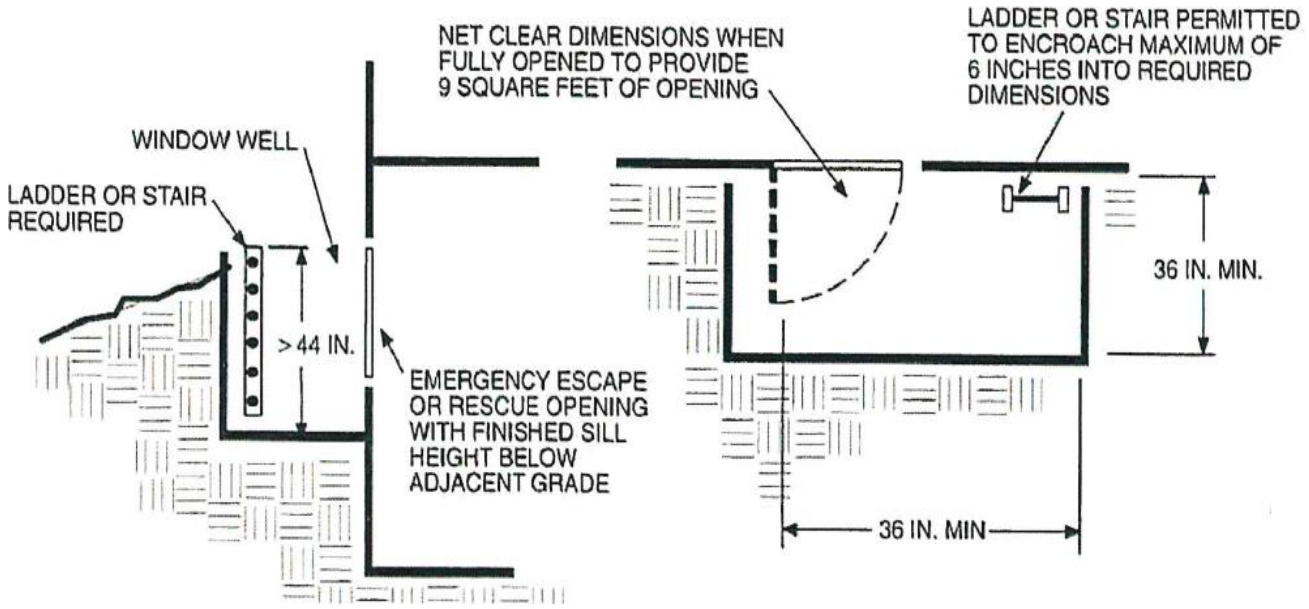
Height	Width
41	20.01
40.5	20.26
40	20.52
39.5	20.77
39	21.04
38.5	21.32
38	21.6
37.5	21.88
37	22.18
36.5	22.48
36	22.8
35.5	23.12
35	23.45
34.5	23.79
34	24.15
33.5	24.5
33	24.87
32.5	25.25

Height	Width
32	25.65
31.5	26.05
31	26.47
30.5	26.91
30	27.36
29.5	27.82
29	27.82
28.5	28.5
28	29.31
27.5	29.84
27	30.4
26.5	30.97
26	31.56
25.5	32.18
25	32.83
24.5	33.5
24	34.2

R310.2.2 Window sill height. Where a window is provided as the emergency escape and rescue opening, it shall have a sill height of not more than 44 inches (1118 mm) above the floor; where the sill height is below *grade*, it shall be provided with a window well in accordance with Section R310.2.3.

By local amendment, the sill height is measured from the finished floor to the bottom of the clear opening. We also have a local exception that allows emergency escape and rescue windows below grade to have a sill height of 48 inches.

R310.2.3 Window wells. The horizontal area of the window well shall be not less than 9 square feet (0.9 m^2), with a horizontal projection and width of not less than 36 inches (914 mm). The area of the window well shall allow the emergency escape and rescue opening to be fully opened.
Exception: The ladder or steps required by Section R310.2.3.1 shall be permitted to encroach not more than 6 inches (152 mm) into the required dimensions of the window well.



R310.2.3.1 Ladder and steps. Window wells with a vertical depth greater than 44 inches (1118 mm) shall be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with the window in the fully open position. Ladders or steps required by this section shall not be required to comply with Sections R311.7 and R311.8.
Ladders or rungs shall have an inside width of not less than 12 inches (305 mm), shall project not less than 3 inches (76 mm) from the wall and shall be spaced not more than 18 inches (457 mm) on center vertically for the full height of the window well.

Local amendment allows a permanently attached platform of at least 30 inches by 16 inches to reduce the depth of the window well to 42 inches or less, so long as the platform does not impede proper operation of the window. You may also use a terraced window well with a maximum 24-inch vertical rise and minimum 12-inch horizontal projection for each level.

R310.4 Bars, grills, covers and screens. Bars, grilles, covers, screens or similar devices are permitted to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings, bulkhead enclosures, or window wells that serve such openings, provided that the minimum net clear opening size complies with Sections R310.1.1 to R310.2.3, and such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, special knowledge or force greater than that required for the normal operation of the escape and rescue opening.