

Residential Window Change-out and Emergency Escape/Rescue Opening Fullerton Community Development Department Building Division

Background

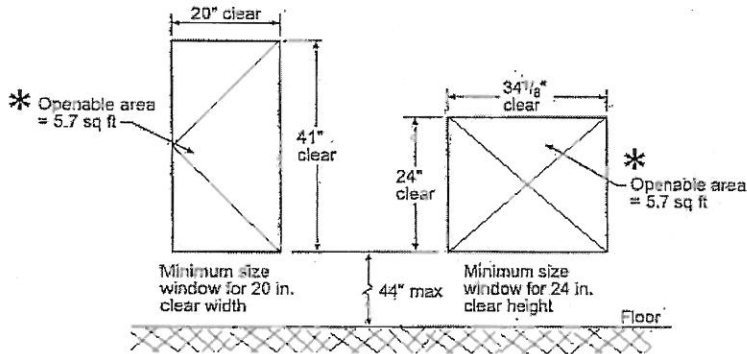
Because so many fire deaths occur as the result of occupants of residential (R) and institutional (I) buildings being asleep at the time of a fire, Section 1026 of the 2007 California Building Code requires that basements and all sleeping rooms below the fourth story have windows or doors that may be used for emergency escape or rescue in Group R and Group I-1 occupancies.

The code intends that the openings required for emergency escape or rescue be located on the exterior of the building so that rescue can be affected from the exterior or, alternatively, the occupants may escape from that opening to the exterior of the building without having to travel through interior of the building in which the normal exit paths are most likely blocked. Therefore, where openings are required, they shall open directly onto a public street, public alley, yard or court. This provision ensures that continued egress can be accomplished after passing through the emergency escape or rescue opening.

Emergency escape and rescue opening requirements

Per sections 1026.2 and 1026.3 of 2007 California Building Code "Emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 sq. ft...The minimum net clear opening height dimension shall be 24 inches. The minimum net clear opening width dimension shall be 20 inches...openings shall have the bottom of the clear opening not greater than 44 inches measured from the floor"

The minimum opening size and maximum height from floor is illustrated in the figure below:



*Where the opening occurs at grade level, the opening need only be 5 square feet

Requirements for Replacing Bedroom Windows in Existing Homes

Construction Year	Bedroom Egress Requirement	Net Opening Size	Min. Opening Dimensions	Max. Height from Floor
Prior to 1964	Window Size Only	6 sq. ft. (Window Size Only)	None	None
1964 -1980	Yes	5 sq. ft. (Net)	22" (H) X 22" (W)	48" to Sill
1980 - 12/31/07	Yes	5.7 sq. ft. (Net)	24" X 20"	44" to Sill
01/01/08 - Present	Yes	5.7 sq. ft. (Net) 5 sq. ft. (Grade Level Only)	24" X 20"	44" to Clear Opening

*Minimum one window per bedroom unless there exists a door to the exterior.

A building permit is required for any window replacement. Some restrictions and/or modifications might be required when replacing or modifying any bedroom window which does not meet the emergency escape and rescue requirements mentioned above.

Please contact or consult with City of Fullerton Building Department at (714) 738-6541 for further information before window installation.

Hadi Tabatabaee, P.E., CBO
Building Official