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| 2019-01    | Secondary Means of Escape – Egress Windows & Doors |             |                                | August 23, 2019 |
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**Informational Bulletin 2019-01**  
**Secondary Means of Escape – Egress Windows & Doors**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide clarification of the egress window size requirements in dwelling units (to include apartments, etc) as required in NFPA 101 Life Safety Code (2015 Edition) Chapter 24.2.2.3, IRC R310, and IBC 1029.

The primary purpose of the egress window is to provide an occupant with an alternate escape route when fire or smoke blocks the primary means of escape from the dwelling unit. The egress window is required when the building lacks an automatic sprinkler system or a door remote from the primary means of escape.

**New Buildings: Secondary Means of Escape – Egress Windows:**

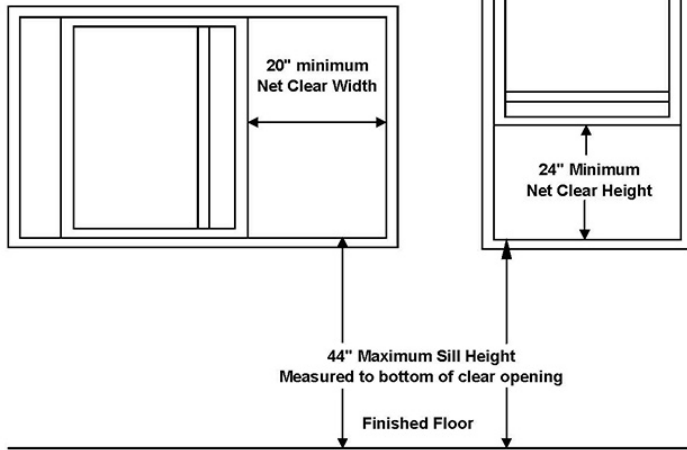
*NFPA 101: 24.2.2.3.3 (2015 Edition)*

An egress window is an outside window operable from the inside without the use of tools, keys, or any special effort. It shall provide a clear opening of **not less than 5.7 square feet** in the natural open position for new windows.

The window width shall be not less than 20 in. and the height shall be not less than 24 in. The bottom of the window opening shall be not more than 44 in. above the floor.

Such means of escape (egress windows) shall be acceptable where one of the following criteria is met:

- (1) The window shall be within 20 ft. of the finished ground level.
- (2) The window shall be directly accessible to fire department rescue apparatus as approved by the authority having jurisdiction.
- (3) The window or door shall open onto an exterior balcony.



A 28 in. by 30 in. opening gives 5.8 sq. ft. of net clear opening.

A 20 in. by 26 in. opening gives 3.6 sq. ft. of net clear opening, which does not meet egress guidelines.

A 20 in. wide casement must be at least 42 in. tall for 5.7 sq. ft. of net clear opening.

A 24 in. tall awning must be at least 35 in. wide for 5.7 sq. ft. of net clear opening.

**Egress Window Dimensions – Minimum 5.7 square feet (820.8 square inches)**

|        |     | WIDTH (inches) |     |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|--------|-----|----------------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|        |     | 20             | 21  | 22  | 23   | 24   | 25   | 26   | 27   | 28   | 29   | 30   | 31   | 32   | 33   | 34   | 35   |
| HEIGHT | 24  | 480            | 504 | 528 | 552  | 576  | 600  | 624  | 648  | 672  | 696  | 720  | 744  | 768  | 792  | 816  | 840  |
|        | 25  | 500            | 525 | 550 | 575  | 600  | 625  | 650  | 675  | 700  | 725  | 750  | 775  | 800  | 825  | 850  | 875  |
|        | 26  | 520            | 546 | 572 | 598  | 624  | 650  | 676  | 702  | 728  | 754  | 780  | 806  | 832  | 858  | 884  | 910  |
|        | 27  | 540            | 567 | 594 | 621  | 648  | 675  | 702  | 729  | 756  | 783  | 810  | 837  | 864  | 891  | 918  | 945  |
|        | 28  | 560            | 588 | 616 | 644  | 672  | 700  | 728  | 756  | 784  | 812  | 840  | 868  | 896  | 924  | 952  | 980  |
|        | 29  | 580            | 609 | 638 | 667  | 696  | 725  | 754  | 783  | 812  | 841  | 870  | 899  | 928  | 957  | 986  | 1015 |
|        | 30  | 600            | 630 | 660 | 690  | 720  | 750  | 780  | 810  | 840  | 870  | 900  | 930  | 960  | 990  | 1020 | 1050 |
|        | 31  | 620            | 651 | 682 | 713  | 744  | 775  | 806  | 837  | 868  | 899  | 930  | 961  | 992  | 1023 | 1054 | 1085 |
|        | 32  | 640            | 672 | 704 | 736  | 768  | 800  | 832  | 864  | 896  | 928  | 960  | 992  | 1024 | 1056 | 1088 | 1120 |
|        | 33  | 660            | 693 | 726 | 759  | 792  | 825  | 858  | 891  | 924  | 957  | 990  | 1023 | 1056 | 1089 | 1122 | 1155 |
|        | 34  | 680            | 714 | 748 | 782  | 816  | 850  | 884  | 918  | 952  | 986  | 1020 | 1054 | 1088 | 1122 | 1156 | 1190 |
|        | 35  | 700            | 735 | 770 | 805  | 840  | 875  | 910  | 945  | 980  | 1015 | 1050 | 1085 | 1120 | 1155 | 1190 | 1225 |
|        | 36  | 720            | 756 | 792 | 828  | 864  | 900  | 936  | 972  | 1008 | 1044 | 1080 | 1116 | 1152 | 1188 | 1224 | 1260 |
|        | 37  | 740            | 777 | 814 | 851  | 888  | 925  | 962  | 999  | 1036 | 1073 | 1110 | 1147 | 1184 | 1221 | 1258 | 1295 |
| 38     | 760 | 798            | 836 | 874 | 912  | 950  | 988  | 1026 | 1064 | 1102 | 1140 | 1178 | 1216 | 1254 | 1292 | 1330 |      |
| 39     | 780 | 819            | 858 | 897 | 936  | 975  | 1014 | 1053 | 1092 | 1131 | 1170 | 1209 | 1248 | 1287 | 1326 | 1365 |      |
| 40     | 800 | 840            | 880 | 920 | 960  | 1000 | 1040 | 1080 | 1120 | 1160 | 1200 | 1240 | 1280 | 1320 | 1360 | 1400 |      |
| 41     | 820 | 861            | 902 | 943 | 984  | 1025 | 1066 | 1107 | 1148 | 1189 | 1230 | 1271 | 1312 | 1353 | 1394 | 1435 |      |
| 42     | 840 | 882            | 924 | 966 | 1008 | 1050 | 1092 | 1134 | 1176 | 1218 | 1260 | 1302 | 1344 | 1386 | 1428 | 1470 |      |

NOTE: Numbers in the grayed areas are too small. Choose any combination in the white areas.

**Existing Buildings: Means of Escape – Egress Windows:**

*NFPA 101 A.24.2.2.3.3 (2015 Edition)*

The clear opening of an existing secondary means of escape (escape window) under 24.2.2.3.3 shall be:

1. The opening (natural open position) for a wood, vinyl, aluminum or fiberglass framed window shall be a minimum of 20” X 24” (3.3 sq. ft.). - *For the occupant(s) to escape.*
  - a) The total window/wall opening area shall **not be less than 5.0 square feet.** – *For firefighters to enter for search & rescue.*
2. The opening (natural open position) of a steel framed window shall be a minimum of 20” X 24” with at least one dimension exceeded to provide **not less than 5.0 square feet** of net free opening. – *For occupants to escape and firefighters to enter.*

**Guidance:**

The minimum clear opening became a requirement of this Code in 1976, and was based on tests conducted to determine the minimum size of the wall opening required to allow a firefighter wearing turnout gear and SCBA entry into the room from the exterior to affect search and rescue.

*For window openings within 1” or less of the minimum requirements, reasonable consideration should be given for sashes that do not require tools or special effort to remove.*

**Egress Window Dimensions – Minimum of 5.0 square feet (720 square inches)**

|        |     | WIDTH |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |      |      |      |
|--------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|
|        |     | 20    | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  | 27   | 28   | 29   | 30   |
| HEIGHT | 24  | 480   | 504 | 528 | 552 | 576 | 600 | 624 | 648  | 672  | 696  | 720  |
|        | 25  | 500   | 525 | 550 | 575 | 600 | 625 | 650 | 675  | 700  | 725  | 750  |
|        | 26  | 520   | 546 | 572 | 598 | 624 | 650 | 676 | 702  | 728  | 754  | 780  |
|        | 27  | 540   | 567 | 594 | 621 | 648 | 675 | 702 | 729  | 756  | 783  | 810  |
|        | 28  | 560   | 588 | 616 | 644 | 672 | 700 | 728 | 756  | 784  | 812  | 840  |
|        | 29  | 580   | 609 | 638 | 667 | 696 | 725 | 754 | 783  | 812  | 841  | 870  |
|        | 30  | 600   | 630 | 660 | 690 | 720 | 750 | 780 | 810  | 840  | 870  | 900  |
|        | 31  | 620   | 651 | 682 | 713 | 744 | 775 | 806 | 837  | 868  | 899  | 930  |
|        | 32  | 640   | 672 | 704 | 736 | 768 | 800 | 832 | 864  | 896  | 928  | 960  |
|        | 33  | 660   | 693 | 726 | 759 | 792 | 825 | 858 | 891  | 924  | 957  | 990  |
|        | 34  | 680   | 714 | 748 | 782 | 816 | 850 | 884 | 918  | 952  | 986  | 1020 |
| 35     | 700 | 735   | 770 | 805 | 840 | 875 | 910 | 945 | 980  | 1015 | 1050 |      |
| 36     | 720 | 756   | 792 | 828 | 864 | 900 | 936 | 972 | 1008 | 1044 | 1080 |      |

NOTE: Numbers in the grayed areas are too small. Choose any combination in the white areas.

*A limited but reasonable time, commensurate with the magnitude of expenditure, disruption of services, and degree of hazard, shall be allowed for compliance with any part of this Code for existing buildings.*