



## DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE

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EST. 12/18/01, REV. 10/20/2015

**EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE OPENINGS** of the International Residential Code adopted and amended by New Castle County states in part:

**Emergency escape and rescue required.** Basements, habitable attics, and every sleeping room shall have not less than one operable emergency escape and rescue opening. Such opening shall open directly into a public street, public alley, yard or court. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, an emergency escape and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room, but shall not be required in adjoining areas of the basement. Where emergency escape and rescue openings are required, they 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 the International Residential Code. Where a door is provided as the required emergency escape and rescue opening, it shall be permitted to be a side hinged door or a slider. Where the door opening is below the adjacent ground elevation, it shall be provided with a bulkhead enclosure. The bulkhead enclosure shall comply with the International Residential Code. The net clear opening dimensions required by this section shall be obtained by the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue openings.

**Minimum opening area\*** All emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet (0.530 m<sup>2</sup>).

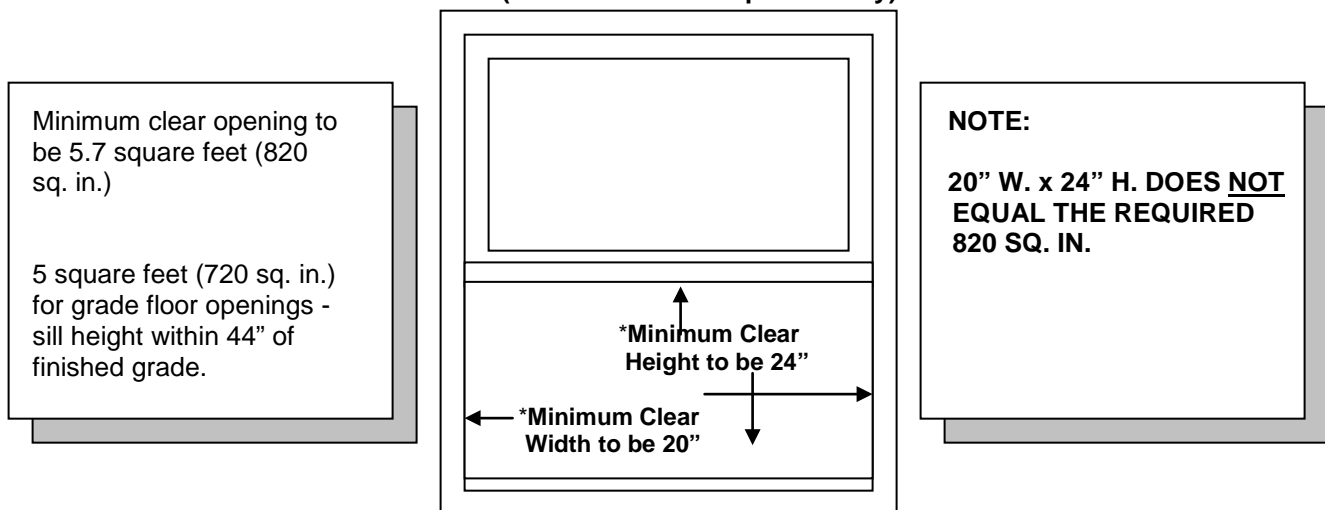
**Exception:** Grade floor openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5 square feet (0.465 m<sup>2</sup>), but window sill height must be within 44 inches of finish grade.

**Minimum opening height** The minimum net clear opening shall be 24 inches (610 mm).

**Minimum opening width** The minimum net clear opening shall be 20 inches (508 mm).

**Operational constraints** Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools, or special knowledge.

**SAMPLE DRAWING  
(For Illustrative Purposes Only)**



- A window having the required minimum width of 20 inches would need to have a measured height of 41 inches to meet the required 820 square inches. (20 " x 41" = 820 sq. inches )
- A window having the required minimum height of 24 inches would need to have a measured width of 34 ½ inches to meet the required 820 square inches. (24" x 34 ½ " = 828 sq. inches )
- Some window manufacturers can provide "Egress Hardware" for casement style windows; otherwise, diagonal entry must meet minimum opening requirements.
- Note: Please see the International Residential Code, Chapter 3 for additional requirements on window wells, bulkheads, and rescue openings.