



**Boulder
County**

**Boulder County
Land Use Department
Publications**

Emergency Escape & Rescue Openings

Land Use Department
 Courthouse Annex Building
 2045 13th Street
 PO Box 471
 Boulder, CO 80302

**Building Safety &
Inspection Services:**

303-441-3926
 e: building_official@bouldercounty.org
 w: www.bouldercounty.org/lu

Office Hours:

8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Mon., Wed., Thurs., Fri.
 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Tuesday

Building Permits can be applied for and
 issued until 4 p.m.

Emergency Escape & Rescue Openings

Per 2015 IRC section R310.

Basements and every sleeping room shall have at least one operable emergency escape and rescue opening. At the time of inspection, if windows installed in rooms requiring emergency escape and rescue openings do not meet the requirements, the windows will have to be removed and replaced with code-conforming windows. This includes new construction, remodels, and window replacements.

Size and Dimension Requirements for Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings

1. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a minimum net clear opening area of 5.7 square feet (821 square inches) (0.53 m²). Grade floor openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5 square feet (720 square inches) (0.465 m²).
2. The minimum net clear openable height dimension shall be 24 inches (610 mm).
3. The minimum net clear openable width dimension shall be 20 inches (508 mm).
4. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools, or special knowledge.
5. Sill height shall not be more than 44 inches above the floor. Measured from the finished floor, to the bottom of the clear opening.
6. Foundation wall cuts for Egress Windows require an engineer's design and/or inspection. The document shall be signed, sealed, and dated from an engineer licensed in the State of Colorado.

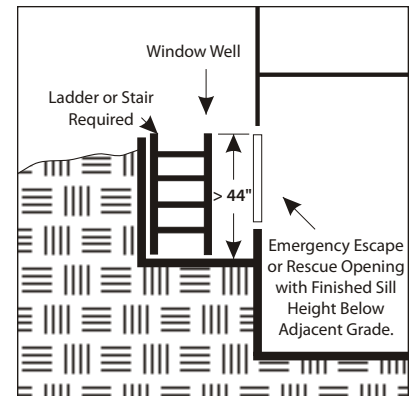


Figure 1: Window Well Dimensions.

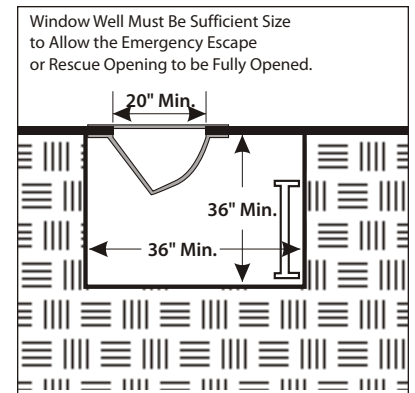


Figure 2: Window Well Dimensions.

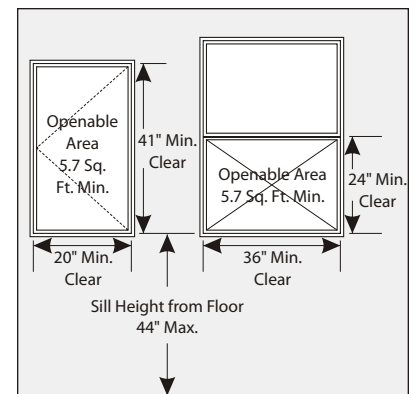


Figure 3: Emergency Escape and Rescue Window.

Window Wells for Emergency Escape and Rescue Openings

Emergency escape and rescue openings with a finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation shall be provided with a window well. Escape and rescue window wells shall comply with the following:

1. A minimum horizontal area of 9 square feet with a minimum horizontal projection and width of 36 inches. The area of the window well shall allow the emergency escape and rescue opening to be fully opened.
2. Window wells with a vertical depth of more than 44 inches shall be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with the window in the fully open position. Ladders or rungs shall have an inside width of 12 inches (305 mm), shall project at least 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.

Bars, grates, covers, screens, or similar devices are permitted to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings and window wells provided the net clear opening size is maintained and the devices are 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.