



## Code Information Sheet

# EGRESS / RESCUE WINDOWS

The saying, "Always have two ways out" is especially true when it comes to home fires. When the basement stairs are blocked, or fire and thick, black smoke is racing down a hallway toward a dead-end bedroom, windows that are large enough for you to escape - and for firefighters to enter - become essential lifesaving equipment. These all-important secondary means of escape are called egress windows.

Few of us think of windows as lifesaving equipment - but they are! When you need to escape a house fire or other disaster, or when rescue personnel need to enter - the right size egress window can make the difference between life and death.

The net clear opening of the window refers to the actual free and clear space that exists when the window is open. It is not the rough opening size or the glass panel size or any other size, but the actual opening a person can crawl through. The Code requires the opening large enough so firefighters can crawl through the window in full protective gear with an air tank on their back.

The code requires that every sleeping room, living area or school classroom must be provided with a secondary means of escape. That means at least one operable window or exterior door approved for emergency egress or rescue.

**Code Definition: Living Area** – Any normally occupiable space in a residential occupancy, other than sleeping rooms, bathrooms, toilet compartments, kitchens, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces.

Selecting a new egress window doesn't need to be intimidating. Window manufacturers have many options and list the clear opening of their windows in their catalogs, and whether they meet egress requirements.

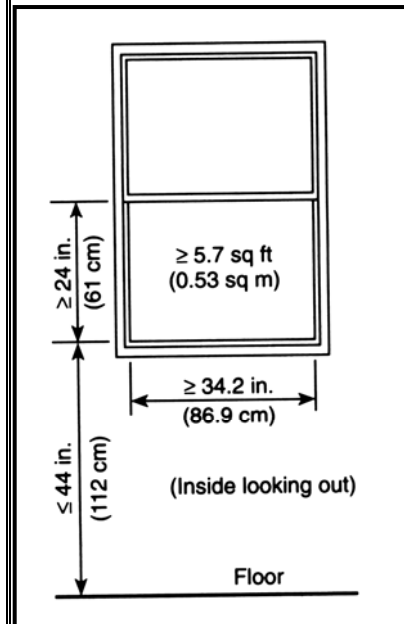
### Requirements of the VERMONT FIRE & BUILDING SAFETY CODE

#### Secondary Means of Escape. NFPA 101 Section 24.2.2.3

The secondary means of escape shall be an outside window or door operable from the inside without the use of tools, keys, or special effort and shall provide a clear opening of not less than **5.7 sq. ft. for New Windows** and no smaller than **5.0 sq. ft. for Existing Windows**. The width shall be not less than **20 in. (51 cm)**, and the height shall be not less than **24 in. (61 cm)**. The bottom of the opening shall be not more than **44 in. (112 cm)** above the floor.

**Note** } a window opening that's the bare minimum of 24 in. high and 20 in. wide **does not** meet the egress requirements, since its net clear opening is only 3.33 sq. ft. A window has to be taller and/or wider than these minimums to meet the 5.7-sq.-ft.-opening requirement.

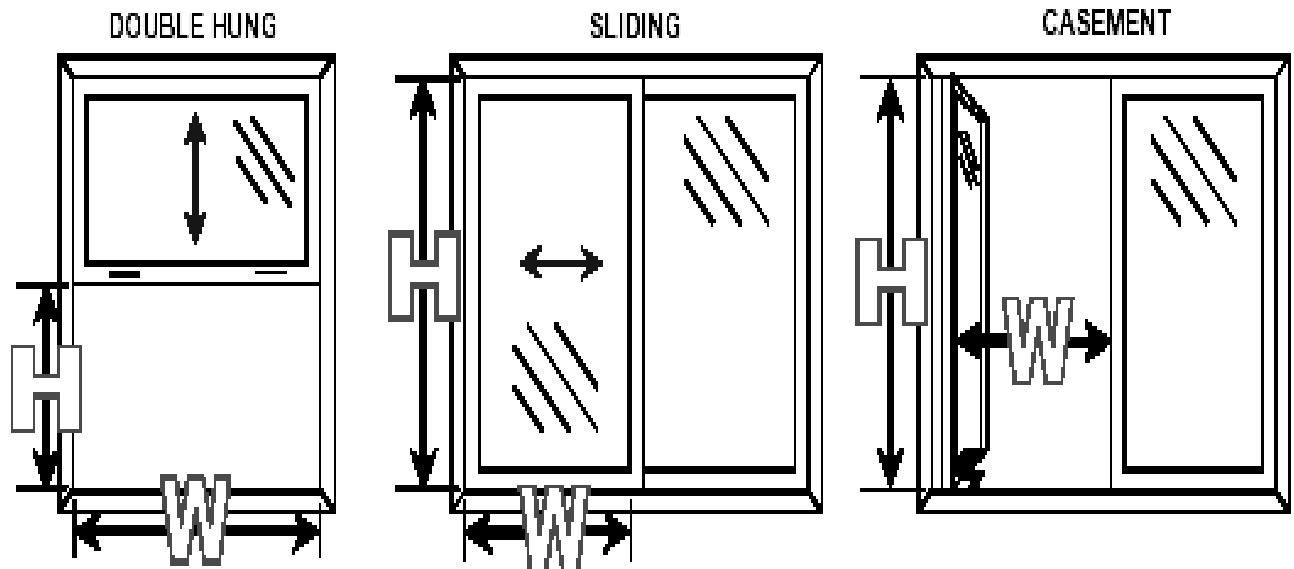
Such means of escape shall be acceptable where one of the following criteria are met:



- (1) The window shall be within 20 ft (6.1 m) of grade.
- (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.

**Use the worksheet on the back of this sheet to determine whether your window meets the requirements of an egress window.**

1) Check Window Height and Width



Is the clear openable height, **H** at least 24 inches? Yes  No

Is the clear openable width, **W** at least 20 inches? Yes  No

2) Check Window Opening Area (fill in the three blanks)

**H** \_\_\_\_\_ X **W** \_\_\_\_\_ = **A** \_\_\_\_\_

Openable height (inches)      Openable width (inches)      Openable area (square inches)

Is the clear openable area **A** at least 820 square inches? Yes  No

3) Check the distance from the floor to the bottom of opening

Is the distance, **S** from the floor to the finished sill (bottom of opening) 44 inches or less? Yes  No

	<b>H</b> eight	X	<b>W</b> idth	=	<b>A</b> rea	<b>OK</b>
BEDROOM # 2						
BEDROOM # 3						
LIVING AREA # 1						
LIVING AREA # 2						
OTHER ROOM						
OTHER ROOM						

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL & STATE FIRE ACADEMY

Central Office Berlin 802-479-7561      State Fire Academy Office Pittsford 802-483-2755  
 Regional Offices Barre 802-479-4434 \* Rutland 802-786-5867 \* Springfield 802-885-8883 \* Williston 802-879-2300