



2006 INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE® COMMENTARY

**R310.1.1 Minimum opening area.** All emergency escape and rescue opening 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>).

❖ Where an emergency escape and rescue window is located at grade level, the opening size requirement is reduced to be 5 square feet (0.46 m<sup>2</sup>). This results from the increased ease of access from the exterior and the probability that a ladder will not be needed.

**R310.1.2 Minimum opening height.** The minimum net clear opening height shall be 24 inches (610 mm).

❖ The minimum opening height for emergency space and rescue opening is 24 inches (610 mm), based on the minimum dimension of a fire fighter with full rescue equipment.

**R310.1.3 Minimum opening width.** The minimum net clear opening width shall be 20 inches (508 mm).

❖ This section establishes a minimum width of 20 inches (508 mm) for emergency space and rescue openings, based on the minimum dimension of a fire fighter with full rescue equipment.

**R310.1.4 Operational constraints.** Emergency escape and rescue opening shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge.

❖ Openings for emergency escape and rescue must be operational from the inside. Keys, tools or special tools knowledge must not be needed to operate these openings. If keys or tools are necessary, they might not be readily available in an emergency or panic situation, and an individual might not be able to use them, so the opening would be unusable. Section R310.1 also requires the opening size to be obtained by the normal operation of the window. See Section R310.1 commentary.

**R310.2 Window wells.** The minimum horizontal area of the window well shall be 9 square feet (0.9 m<sup>2</sup>), with a minimum horizontal projection and width of 36 inches (914 mm). The area of the window well shall allow the emergency escape and rescue opening to be fully opened.