
TECHNICAL BULLETIN: BI-26-014

EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE OPENINGS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Information Bulletin is to provide guidance to designers, builders, and property owners regarding the emergency escape and rescue opening (EERO) requirements of the California Residential Code (CRC). These provisions are intended to safeguard occupants—particularly in sleeping rooms where individuals may be unaware of a developing fire—and to provide access for fire service personnel.

INFORMATION

Unless otherwise directed by the Building Official, the following requirements shall apply to detached one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories above grade plane in height:

1. General Requirement

- Per CRC Section R310.1, basements, habitable attics, and every sleeping room shall have at least one operable emergency escape and rescue opening.
- Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, each sleeping room shall be provided with its own emergency escape and rescue opening.
- Openings shall open directly to a public way, yard, or court that provides access to a public way.

2. Dimensional Criteria

- **Minimum Opening Area:** 5.7 square feet net clear opening. Grade-floor or below-grade openings may be 5.0 square feet minimum.
- **Minimum Clear Height:** 24 inches.
- **Minimum Clear Width:** 20 inches.
- **Maximum Sill Height:** 44 inches above the finished floor. Openings below grade shall be provided with area wells per CRC Sections R310.4.1 through R310.4.4.
- Dimensions shall be measured from inside the building under normal window operation.

3. Operational Constraints

- Openings shall be operable from the inside without the use of keys, tools, or special knowledge, and shall be maintained free of obstructions.
- **Doors:** Where a door is used as an EERO, it shall be side-hinged or sliding.
- **Opening Control Devices:** Window opening control and fall-prevention devices shall be installed no more than 70 inches above the finished floor and maintained operable at all times.

- **Bars, Grilles, Covers, and Screens:** Such devices are permitted if they are releasable or removable from the inside without tools, keys, or force greater than that required for normal operation, and if the minimum clear opening sizes required by CRC Sections R310.2–R310.2.2 and R310.4.1 are met.

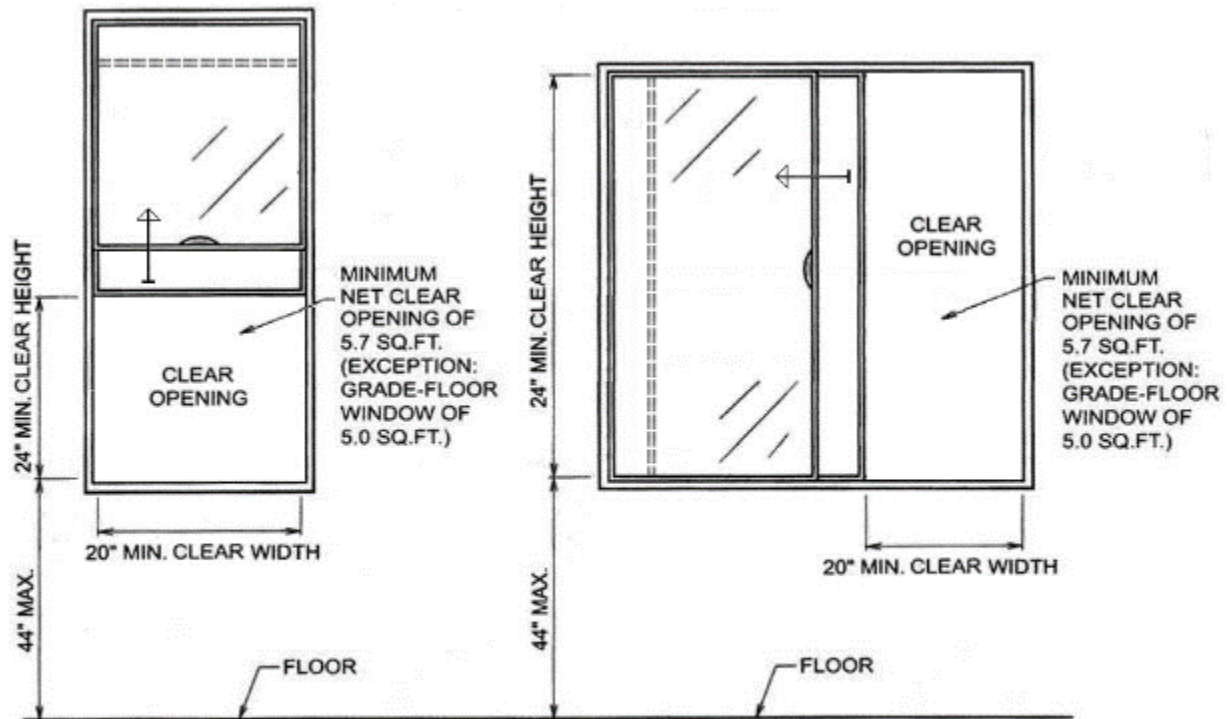
4. Replacement Windows for EEROs

- Per CRC Section R310.5, replacement windows installed in existing openings are not required to meet minimum dimension and sill height requirements, provided:
 - a. The replacement window is the manufacturer’s largest standard size that will fit within the existing frame or rough opening, and
 - b. The replacement window is the same operating style as the existing window, or a style that provides an equal or greater net clear opening area.

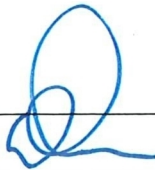
ENFORCEMENT

Building Division staff shall require compliance with these requirements during plan review and inspections, unless specific exceptions are granted by the Building Official.

EXAMPLE:



**FIGURE 1
EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE WINDOW OPENINGS**

<p>Approved: David Dent <i>Deputy Director/Chief Building Official</i></p>	<p>Signature: </p>
	<p>Date: 3/4/22</p>