



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
Office of State Fire Marshal
52 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0052

PAUL R. LePAGE
GOVERNOR

JOHN E. MORRIS
COMMISSIONER

JOSEPH THOMAS
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

October 17, 2013

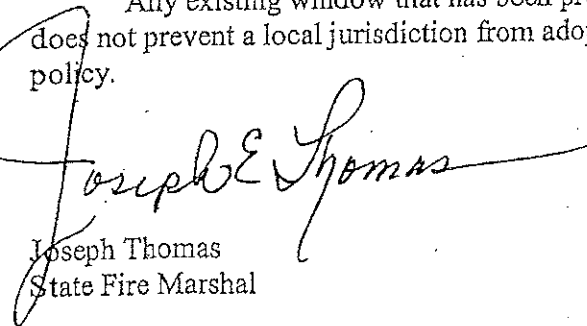
Re: Policy for clarification of existing egress windows

From: Joseph Thomas

Effective November 1, 2013, the following will be the policy for egress windows within existing buildings. Any building constructed after 1976 shall be required to comply with the requirement to provide 5.7 sq. ft. of net clear opening with a minimum width of 20" and minimum height of 24". The window shall also meet all other requirements for egress windows contained in the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code. Any replacement windows installed in a building constructed after 1976 shall be required to meet the net clear opening of 5.7 sq.ft. This shall be measured with the window in it's natural open position.

Any building constructed before 1976 will be allowed to meet the following specifications. The net clear opening would be allowed to meet the minimum 20" in width and 24" in height with a total net clear opening of 3.3 sq.ft; if the window is constructed of wood or vinyl and the overall window sash size meets a minimum of 5.0 sq. ft. The window shall meet all other requirements for an egress window as specified in the NFPA 101 Life safety Code as adopted by the Office of State Fire Marshal. Any replacement window installed in a building constructed prior to 1976 shall meet the same requirements as the existing windows and shall not reduce the existing net clear opening below the minimum requirements.

Any existing window that has been previously approved will be allowed to continue in use. This policy does not prevent a local jurisdiction from adopting a more restrictive policy under an ordinance or life safety policy.


Joseph Thomas
State Fire Marshal

PREVENTION * MITIGATION/ SUPPRESSION * LAW ENFORCEMENT

OFFICES LOCATED AT: 45 COMMERCE DRIVE, AUGUSTA, MAINE 04330
(207) 626-3870 ADMINISTRATION/ INVESTIGATIONS (207) 287-3659 TDD
(207) 626-3880 INSPECTIONS/ PLANS REVIEW

(207) 287-6251 FAX

EGRESS WINDOW CHART 5.7 SQUARE FEET

W I D T H B Y I N C H E S

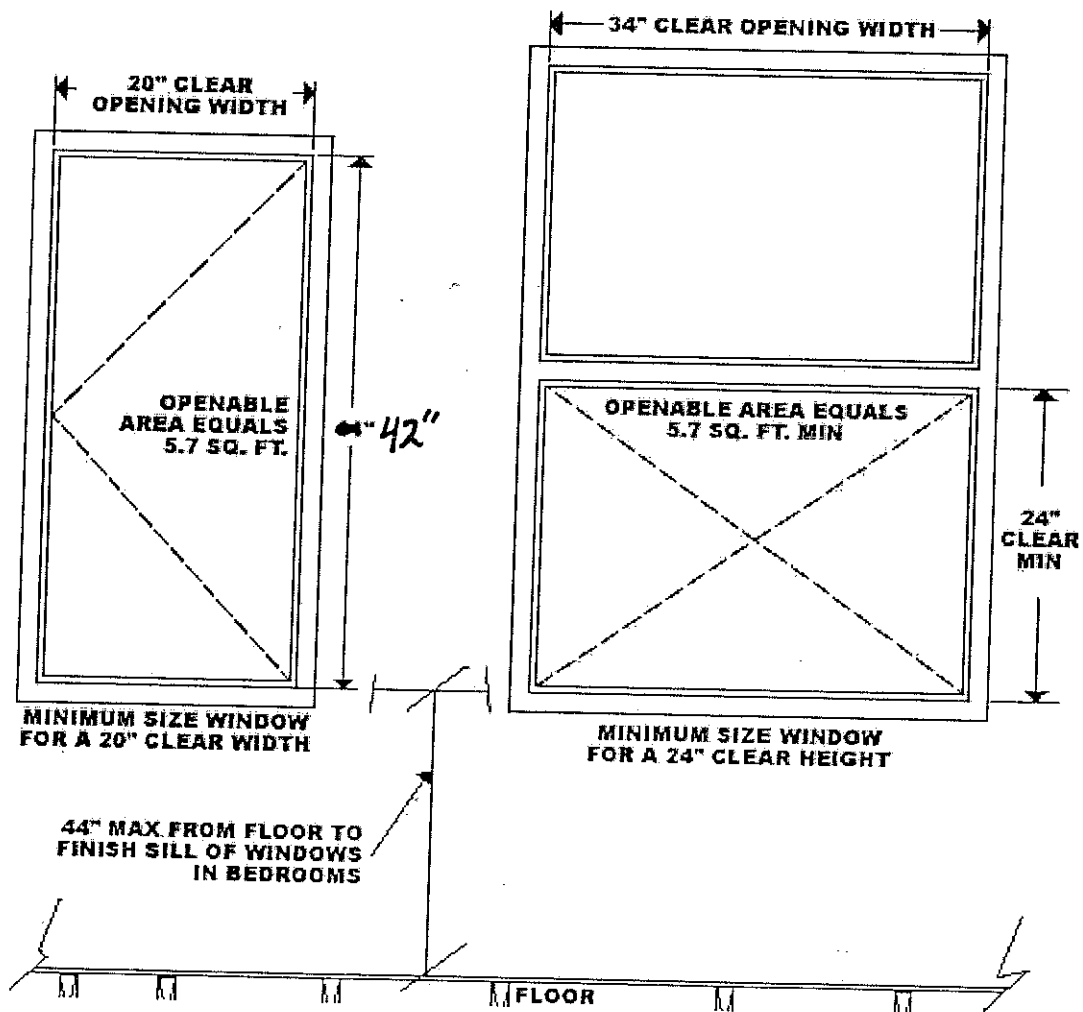
		20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
H E I G H T B Y I N C H E S	24	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.5	5.6	5.8	6.0
	25	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.7	5.9	6.0	6.2
	26	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.3	6.5
	27	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.1	6.3	6.5	6.7
	28	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.0
	29	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.0	7.2
	30	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.7	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.0	7.2	7.5
	31	4.3	4.5	4.7	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.5	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.1	7.3	7.5	7.7
	32	4.4	4.6	4.8	5.1	5.3	5.5	5.7	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.1	7.3	7.5	7.7	8.0
	33	4.5	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.5	5.8	5.9	6.1	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.1	7.3	7.5	7.7	8.0	8.2
	34	4.7	4.9	5.1	5.4	5.6	5.7	6.1	6.3	6.6	6.8	7.0	7.3	7.5	7.7	8.0	8.2	8.5
	35	4.8	5.1	5.3	5.5	5.8	6.0	6.3	6.5	6.8	7.0	7.2	7.5	7.7	8.0	8.2	8.5	8.7
	36	5.0	5.2	5.5	5.7	6.0	6.2	6.5	6.7	7.0	7.2	7.5	7.7	8.0	8.2	8.5	8.7	9.0
	37	5.1	5.3	5.6	5.9	6.1	6.4	6.6	6.9	7.1	7.4	7.7	7.9	8.2	8.4	8.7	8.9	9.2
	38	5.2	5.5	5.8	6.0	6.3	6.5	6.8	7.1	7.3	7.6	7.9	8.1	8.4	8.7	8.9	9.2	9.5
	39	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.2	6.5	6.7	7.0	7.3	7.5	7.8	8.1	8.3	8.6	8.9	9.2	9.4	9.7
	40	5.5	5.8	6.1	6.3	6.6	6.9	7.2	7.5	7.7	8.0	8.3	8.6	8.8	9.1	9.4	9.7	10.
	41	5.6	5.9	6.2	6.5	6.8	7.1	7.4	7.6	7.9	8.2	8.5	8.8	9.1	9.3	9.6	9.9	10.
	42	5.8	6.1	6.4	6.7	7.0	7.2	7.5	7.8	8.1	8.4	8.7	9.0	9.3	9.6	9.9	10.	10.
	43	5.9	6.2	6.5	6.8	7.1	7.4	7.7	8.0	8.3	8.6	8.9	9.2	9.5	9.8	10.	10.	10.
44	6.1	6.4	6.7	7.0	7.3	7.6	7.9	8.2	8.5	8.8	9.1	9.4	9.7	10.	10.	10.	11.	
45	6.2	6.5	6.8	7.1	7.5	7.8	8.1	8.4	8.7	9.0	9.3	9.6	10.	10.	10.	10.	11.	
46	6.3	6.7	7.0	7.3	7.6	7.9	8.3	8.6	8.9	9.2	9.5	9.9	10.	10.	10.	11.	11.	
47	6.5	6.8	7.1	7.5	7.8	8.1	8.4	8.8	9.1	9.4	9.7	10.	10.	10.	11.	11.	11.	
48	6.6	7.0	7.3	7.6	8.0	8.3	8.6	9.0	9.3	9.6	10.	10.	10.	11.	11.	11.	12.	
49	6.8	7.1	7.4	7.8	8.1	8.5	8.8	9.1	9.5	9.8	10.	10.	10.	11.	11.	11.	12.	
50	6.9	7.2	7.6	7.9	8.3	8.6	9.0	9.3	9.7	10.	10.	10.	11.	11.	11.	12.	12.	

The window must have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 sq. ft. Net clear opening 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, but the actual opening a person can crawl through.

The window opening must be operational from the inside without keys or tools. Bars, grilles and grates may be installed over windows but must be operational without tools or keys and still allow the minimum clear opening.

Do the math

At first glance; you might assume that a 20-in. by 24-in. window would be acceptable for egress. However, those dimensions would yield a net clear opening of only 3.3 sq. ft. To achieve the required net clear opening of 5.7 sq. ft., a 20-in. wide window would have to be 42 in. high. Likewise, a 24-in. high window would have to be 34 in. wide.

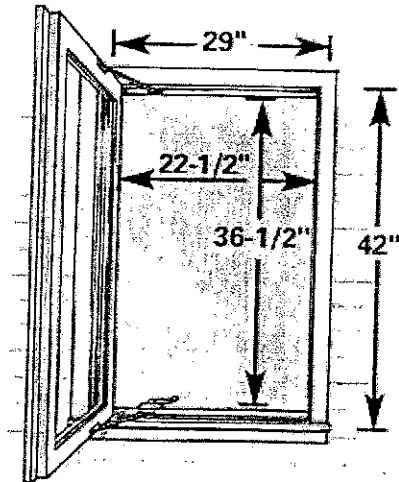


Nearly all window manufacturers specify which of their windows meet national egress requirements right in their catalogs and list the net free opening of their windows. This should take the guesswork out of selecting a window for you addition or remodeling

project. Also, the sales person who sells you the window should be able to help you select a code compliant window provided that they know you need an egress window.

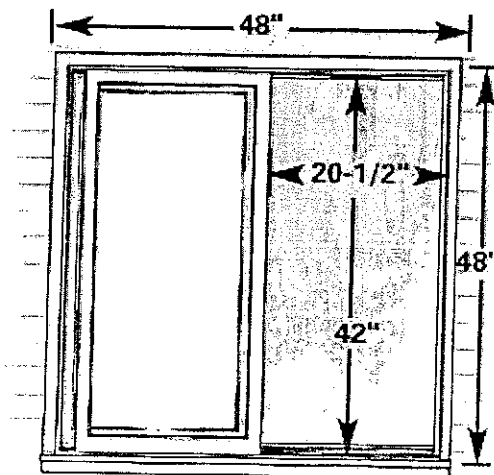
MUST I USE A SPECIAL TYPE OF WINDOW?

A wide variety of window designs can be used for egress windows. You should select a window design that meets your architectural, aesthetic, space, and financial limitations.



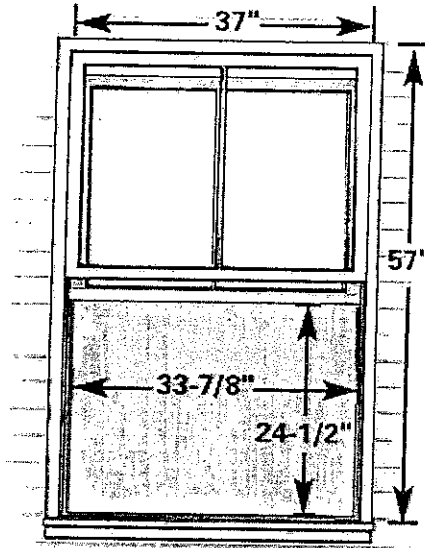
Note: Dimensions shown only for illustration purposes.

Casement windows with hinged sashes that swing free and clear of the opening can be relatively small and still meet egress requirements. This makes them ideal for basement egress and for other areas where space is limited. Some manufacturers can install a special operator arm that allows the window to open wider than the standard operating arm to meet egress requirements. Others have an operator arm that can be pushed to open the window wider in an emergency. These meet egress requirements as long as you leave the "PUSH HERE" label in place.



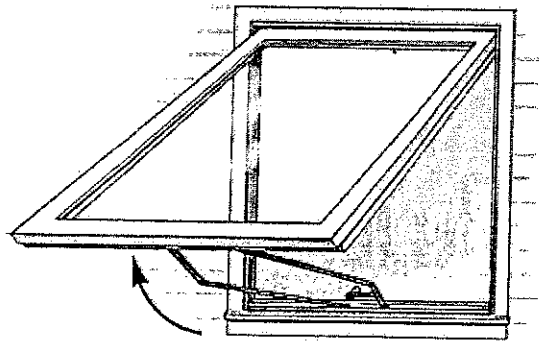
Note: Dimensions shown only for illustration purposes.

Glider or slider windows have sashes that fill nearly half the possible window opening. They require a window nearly twice the size of a casement window.



Note: Dimensions shown only for illustration purposes.

Even when it's fully open, more than half of a **double-hung window's** overall area is blocked by glass. This means that to meet egress window height requirements, a window must be nearly 4 ft. 9 in. in overall height. This height requirement makes it undesirable for most basement egress situations.



Awning windows are problematic. Since the opened sash prevents escape from most window wells, they're unsuitable for basement egress. And with most awning windows, the center opening hardware and height don't meet egress requirements. Some manufacturers offer models with special detachable operators that meet egress requirements.