



## EGRESS WINDOW GUIDELINES

**INTRODUCTION:** Before construction of any egress window within the City of Norwalk city limits, it is important to fully understand the requirements the City has concerning the approval process and subsequent construction requirements listed in the Norwalk Code of Ordinances (155.01). Furthermore, it is also important to review these guidelines to ensure your egress plans are consistent with City code.

### APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS:

**Step 1:** The first step in the application and approval process would be to review the City Code(s) shown below to make sure that any egress structure that you would like to build meets the requirements listed. Make sure to direct any questions you may have to City Community Development staff.

**Step 2:** Once you determine the egress structure you propose to build meets the requirements listed in City Code as well as any restrictive covenants you may have on your property, either go to City Hall to obtain a building permit application or print one off from the City website.

**Step 3:** Complete the application to the best of your knowledge making sure to be as thorough as possible. Upon completion of the application submit the application to City Community Development Staff located in City Hall.

**Step 4:** Allow up to five (5) business days for staff review of the application. Once staff determines whether to approve or deny your application, you will receive a phone call from staff that will inform you of the decision as well as instructions on how to proceed. A general egress window permit is \$25 and will be issued to you at the time you pick up your application.

**\*\*Submitting window specifications as well as technical drawings at the time of application is strongly encouraged and makes the application process more streamlined and efficient.**

### R310.1 Emergency escape and rescue required.

Basements and every sleeping room shall have at least one operable emergency escape and rescue opening. Such opening shall open directly into a public street, public alley, yard or court. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency egress and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room, but shall not be required in adjoining areas of the basement. Where emergency escape and rescue openings are provided they shall have a sill height of not more than 44 inches (1118 mm) above the floor. Where a door opening having a threshold below the adjacent ground elevation serves as an emergency escape and rescue opening and is provided with a bulkhead enclosure, the bulkhead enclosure shall comply with Section R310.3. The net clear opening dimensions required by this section shall be obtained by the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening from the inside. Emergency escape and rescue openings with a finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation shall be provided with a window well in accordance with Section R310.2. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall open directly into a public way, or to a yard or court that opens to a public way.

#### R310.1.1 Minimum opening area.

All emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet (0.530 m<sup>2</sup>). (The operable portion of the window shall be no less than 5.7 square feet).

**Exception:** Grade floor openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5 square feet (0.465 m<sup>2</sup>).

### **R310.1.2 Minimum opening height.**

The minimum net clear opening height shall be 24 inches (610 mm).  
(The height of the operable portion of the window shall be no less than 24 inches).

### **R310.1.3 Minimum opening width.**

The minimum net clear opening width shall be 20 inches (508 mm).  
(The width of the operable portion of the window shall be no less than 20 inches).

**\*\*This does not mean the window dimensions should be 20 inches x 24 inches. These are simply the minimum heights and widths.**

### **R310.1.4 Operational constraints.**

Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge.

### **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. (36 inches wide by 36 inches away (out) from window).

**Exception:** The ladder or steps required by Section R310.2.1 shall be permitted to encroach a maximum of 6 inches (152 mm) into the required dimensions of the window well.

#### **R310.2.1 Ladder and steps.**

Window wells with a vertical depth greater than 44 inches (1118 mm) shall be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with the window in the fully open position. Ladders or steps required by this section shall not be required to comply with Sections R311.5 and R311.6. Ladders or rungs shall have an inside width of at least 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.

### **R310.3 Bulkhead enclosures.**

Bulkhead enclosures shall provide direct access to the basement. The bulkhead enclosure with the door panels in the fully open position shall provide the minimum net clear opening required by Section R310.1.1. Bulkhead enclosures shall also comply with Section R311.5.8.2.

### **R310.4 Bars, grilles, covers and screens.**

Bars, grilles, covers, screens or similar devices are permitted to be placed over emergency escape and rescue openings, bulkhead enclosures, or window wells that serve such openings, provided the minimum net clear opening size complies with Sections R310.1.1 to R310.1.3, and such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, special knowledge or force greater than that which is required for normal operation of the escape and rescue opening.

### **R310.5 Emergency escape windows under decks and porches.**

Emergency escape windows are allowed to be installed under decks and porches provided the location of the deck allows the emergency escape window to be fully opened and provides a path not less than 36 inches (914 mm) in height to a yard or court.