Vermont Department of Public Safety

DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL, THE STATE FIRE ACADEMY AND THE STATE HAZ-MAT TEAM

www.firesafety.vermont.gov

Updated November 2012

SECONDARY MEANS OF ESCAPE

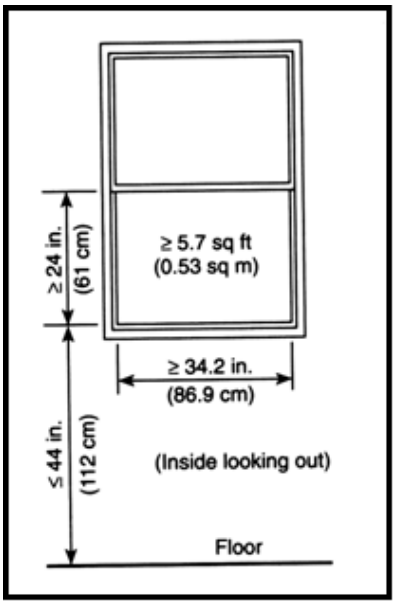
Emergency Egress Windows

CODE INFORMATION SHEET

2012

The saying, "Always have two ways out" is especially true when it comes to home fires. When the basement stairs are blocked, or when 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.



Requirements of the Vermont Fire and 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. Existing Windows many be no smaller than 5.0 sq. ft. 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 must be taller and/or wider than these minimums to meet the 5.7-sq.-ft.-opening requirement.

NFPA 101 Section 24.2.2.3.3

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.

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.

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.

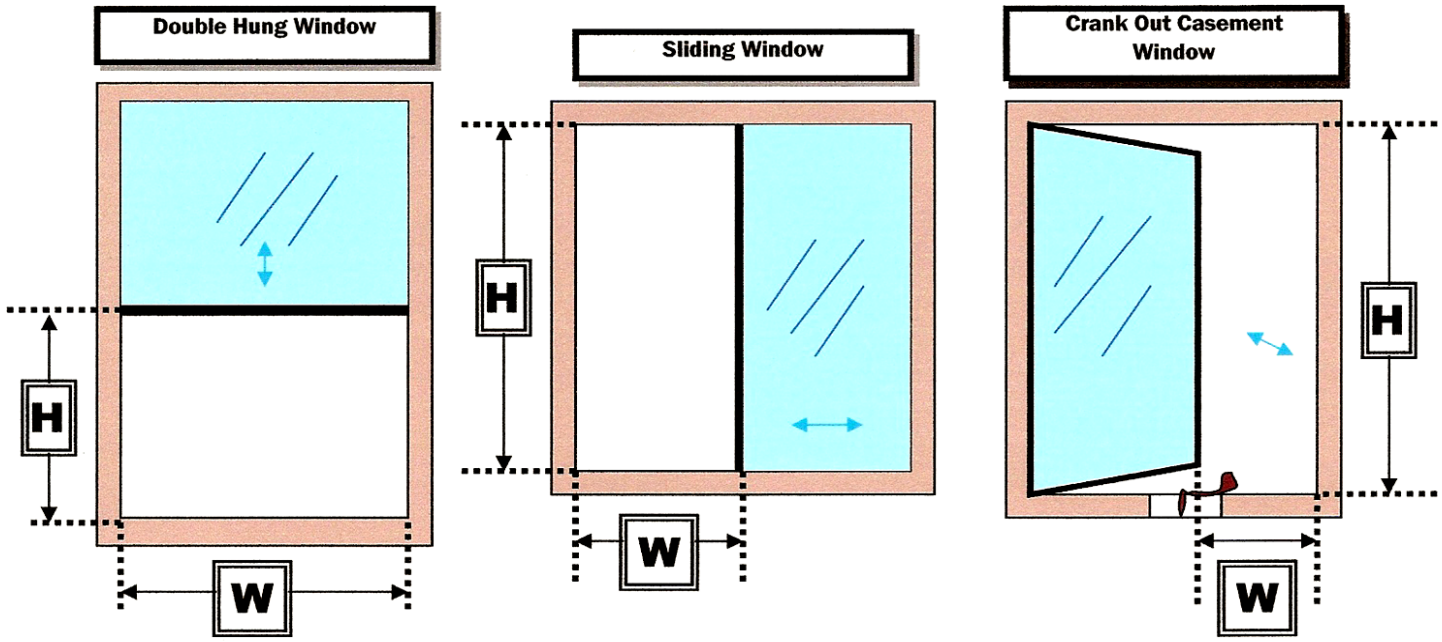
Use the worksheet on the back of this sheet to determine whether your window meets the requirements for second means of escape.

Additional information on back

This sheet is designed to provide information to enhance the public safety of all Vermonters. This code information sheet is not an all-inclusive list of state laws or additional code requirements that may apply. This educational resource sheet does not carry the force of legal opinion and was developed by the Vermont Division of Fire Safety, with information provided by The U.S. Fire Administration and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). For additional information please visit www.firesafety.vermont.gov

Secondary Means of Escape Window Worksheet

Definition of Living Area ***(NFPA 101:3.3.21.5)*** *Any normally occupiable space in a residential occupancy, other than sleeping rooms or rooms that are intended for combination sleeping/living, bathrooms, toilet compartments, kitchens, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces, and similar areas.*



1. Measure the openable height [H] _____ " Is the clear openable height at least 24" ? Yes [ ] No [ ]

2. Measure the openable width [W] _____ " Is the clear openable width at least 20" ? Yes [ ] No [ ]

3. Check opening area [H] _____ X [W] _____ = _____ / 144 = _____ sq ft

4. Measure from the lower sill to finished floor _____ " Is the it 44' or less ? Yes [ ] No [ ]

5. Measure from the sill to outside ground level _____ " Is the it 20 feet or less ? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Location	Height	X	Width	=	Total square in.	Meets requirements Y/N
Bedroom #1						
Bedroom #2						
Bedroom #3						
Bedroom #4						
Living Area						
Family Room						
Other Room 1						
Other Room2						
Basement Room						