



UNDERSTANDING EGRESS WINDOWS

ORIGINALLY a window was intended to provide light and ventilation.

TODAY codes and regulations require certain windows to provide a means of escape for occupants.

IMAGINE being in a house fire and the basement steps, the only way out, are blocked by flames or thick, black smoke is barreling down a hallway, leaving someone trapped in a back bedroom with small windows. These are bad situations in which the size of the nearest (or only) window opening could mean life or death.

ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE SECTION 1031

"Basements and sleeping rooms below the fourth story shall have at least one exterior emergency escape and rescue opening. Such opening shall open directly into a public street, alley, yard or court."

This "emergency escape and rescue opening" can be a window, skylight or patio door, but it must meet certain criteria:

- ✓ It must have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 sq. ft. A "net clear opening" refers to the actual free and clear space that exists when the window is opened under normal operation. It is not the rough opening size, glass panel size, or any other size, but the actual opening a person can crawl through.
- ✓ Ground-floor windows only need a net clear opening of 5 sq. ft. They can be smaller because a rescue ladder doesn't take up part of the opening.
- ✓ The clear opening height must be at least 24", the clear opening width must be at least 20" and the bottom of the clear opening must be within 44" of the floor.
- ✓ The window must be operational from the inside without keys or tools.

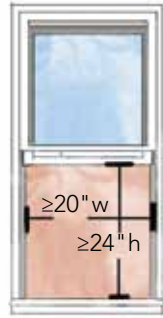
IMPORTANT – a window opening that meets the bare minimum of 24" high and 20" wide does NOT meet egress requirements since its net clear opening is only 3.33 sq. ft. A window has to be taller and/or wider than these minimums to meet the egress opening requirements.

State and local codes can add additional requirements that need to be taken into consideration, so please make sure you check the local codes in your area.

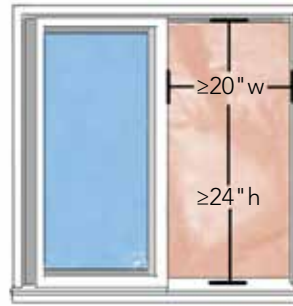
Below are examples of minimum net clear opening sizes needed in order to properly meet egress requirements.



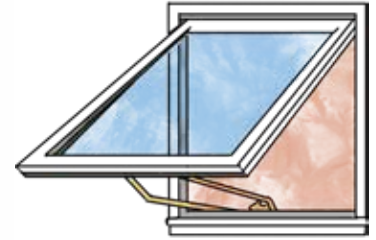
Casement windows, with hinged sashes that swing free and clear of the opening can be relatively small and still meet egress requirements. This makes them ideal for basement egress and for other areas where space is limited.



Double hung windows with vertically sliding sashes that always fill more than half the opening area, have to be pretty big to meet egress requirements. The overall size of the smallest double hung egress window would be almost twice the area of the smallest egress casement window.



Slider windows, with horizontally sliding sashes that always fill half the possible window opening area, also have to be big enough to meet egress requirements. The overall size of the smallest slider egress window would be almost twice the area of the smallest egress casement window.



Awning windows are problematic. Since the opened sash prevents escape from most window wells, they are unsuitable for basement egress. ProVia awning windows do not meet egress requirements due to the opening hardware and low height.

Renderings shown above are strictly for size requirements and do not represent ProVia windows. Egress sizing will change based on selected hardware.

ProVia casement windows will come standard with a washable casement hinge, which pivots a few inches from the window frame. However, selecting the non-washable casement hinge option in entryLINK moves the pivot point closer to the frame, providing a wider clear opening. This option can be selected, even when egress is not needed, to allow a greater unobstructed viewing area when the window is open.

Selecting the egress screen option changes the screen retainers to pull tabs, which do not require a tool for screen removal. This option will only appear when all egress sizing criteria is met.



Washable Casement Hinge



Non-Washable Casement Hinge

See the Sizing Tab on entryLINK to verify that the window meets the International Building Code requirements for egress.

ProVia manufactures all windows to custom sizing, down to 1/8" increments, based on the home's needs. It is recommended to have at least one egress window in each room of the house, especially those on the second floor.

