



# EGRESS WINDOW REQUIREMENTS

Per state law and/or regulation, any sleeping room in a licensed specialty resort, vacation home, camping cabin, or hotel (built after 1992) must have a door that opens to the exterior of the building OR have at least one exterior window of sufficient size to permit the occupants to escape a fire and also to allow a fully outfitted firefighter to enter. This handout was developed to help the owner/operator understand the egress window requirements.

## WHAT IS AN EGRESS WINDOW?

An egress window must meet **ALL** of the four main criteria:

- Minimum net clear opening: 5.7 sq. ft.
- Minimum width of opening: 20 in.
- Minimum height of opening: 24 in.
- Maximum sill height above floor: 48 in. (Local or municipal codes may be more restrictive)

## HOW IS THE NET CLEAR OPENING DETERMINED?

Take measurements of the width and height when the window is fully opened. It is important to measure from inside of the window frame, stated another way, measure the part of the window that is the actual open space (as shown in pictures below). This open area must be unobstructed, free and clear for a person to exit or fire/rescue personnel to enter. Once the dimensions of width (in.) and height (in.) are determined, the net clear opening can then be calculated by multiplying width times height and dividing this total by 144 (1 square foot). See examples below:

### Window net clear opening or clearance measurements-

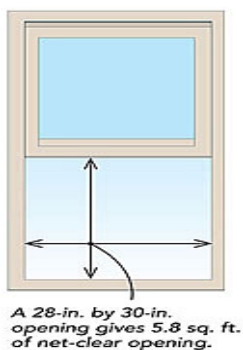
**Example 1:** Opening width – 28”, Opening height – 30” so  $28 \times 30 = 840$ ”, divided by 144” = 5.8 sq. ft. Assuming the window sill is less than 48 in. above the floor, this window **would meet** the egress requirements.

**Example 2:** Opening width – 20”, Opening height – 24” so  $20 \times 24 = 480$ ”, divided by 144” = 3.3 sq. ft. Although this window meets the minimum width and height criteria it does not meet the minimum net clear opening requirement, consequently this window **would not meet** the egress requirements.

**Example 3:** Opening width – 20”, Opening height – 42” so  $20 \times 42 = 840$ ”, divided by 144” = 5.8 sq. ft. Assuming the window sill is less than 48 in. above the floor, this window **would meet** the egress requirements.

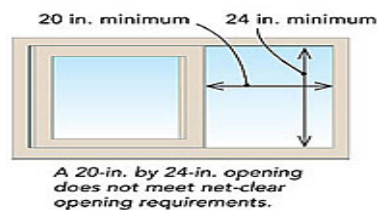
**Example 4:** Opening width – 35”, Opening height – 24” so  $35 \times 24 = 840$ ”, divided by 144” = 5.8 sq. ft. Assuming the window sill is less than 48 in. above the floor, this window **would meet** the egress requirements.

Example 1



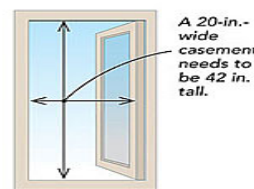
Example 2

3.3 sq. ft. of net-clear opening.



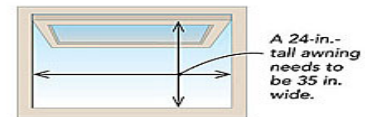
Example 3

5.8 sq. ft. of net-clear opening.



Example 4

5.8 sq. ft. of net-clear opening.



## IF MY WINDOW HAS A NET CLEAR OPENING OF 5.7 sq.ft. WILL IT MEET EGRESS?

Only if the window also meets the minimum dimension and sill requirements. For example, a 1 ft. wide by 5.7 ft. high window opening is still too narrow to climb through, so it wouldn't pass code.

## ARE THERE OTHER REQUIREMENTS?

Yes, the window must be operable from the inside without the use of separate tools, keys, special knowledge or effort. Exceptions, modifications or window well requirements may apply depending on specific circumstances so...

**Please contact the South Dakota DOH for any questions or concerns at 605-773-4945**