



Egress From Dwelling Units

The Building Standards Department issues Builder Tips as part of our customer service program. They are designed to provide an improved understanding of the Building Code and to reduce the costs associated with correcting infractions. Please contact your area building inspector for further information or call the Building Standards Department at 905.475.4848 extension 2189

9.9.9. Egress from Dwelling Units

9.9.9.1. Travel Limit to Exits or Egress Doors

(1) Except as provided in Sentence (2) and (3), every dwelling unit containing more than 1 storey shall have exits or egress doors located so that it shall not be necessary to travel up or down more than 1 storey to reach a level served by

(a) an egress door to a public corridor, enclosed exit stair or exterior passageway,
or

(b) an exit doorway not more than 1.5 m above adjacent ground level.

(2) Where a dwelling unit is not located above or below another suite, the travel limit from a floor level in the dwelling unit to an exit or egress door may exceed 1 storey where that floor level is served by an operable window or door

(a) providing an unobstructed opening of not less than 1.0 m in height and 0.55 m in width, and

(b) located so that the sill is not more than,

(i) 1 m above the floor, and

(ii) 7 m above adjacent ground level.

9.9.10.1. Egress Windows or Doors for Bedrooms

(1) Except where a door on the same floor level as the bedroom provides direct access to the exterior, every floor level containing a bedroom in a suite shall be provided with at least one outside window that

(a) is openable from the inside without the use of tools,

(b) provides an individual, unobstructed open portion having a minimum area of 0.35 m² with no dimension less than 380 mm, and



(c) maintains the required opening described in Clause (b) without the need for additional support. (See Note A-9.9.10.1.(1))

(2) except for basement areas, the window required in Sentence (1) shall have a maximum sill height of 1000 mm above the floor. (See Note A-9.9.10.1.(2))

(3) Where a window required in Sentence (1) opens into a window well, a clearance of not less than 550 mm shall be provided in front of the window. (See Note A-9.9.10.1.(3))

(4) Where a sash of a window referred to in Sentence (3) swings towards the window well, the operation of the sash shall not reduce the clearance in a manner that would restrict escape in an emergency.

(5) Where a protective enclosure is installed over the window well referred to in Sentence (3), the enclosure shall be openable from the inside without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge of the opening mechanism.

(6) When sliding windows are used, the minimum dimensions described in Sentence (1) shall apply to the openable portion of the window.

(7) Where the sleeping area within a live/work unit is on a mezzanine with no obstructions more than 1070 mm above the floor, the window required in Sentence (1) may be provided on the main level of the live/work unit provided the mezzanine is not more than 25% of the area of the live/work unit or 20 m², whichever is less, and an unobstructed direct path of travel is provided from the mezzanine to this window.

OBJECTIVE

A delay in the evacuation of a house can be harmful to the occupants. Therefore, in houses with more than one storey, exits should be provided so that it is not necessary to travel up or down more than one storey to reach a level served by an exit. Where travel to an exit exceeds more than one storey an openable window may be utilized as an escape from the level not served by the exit.

This openable window must be at least 1000 mm in height and 550 mm in width and located not more than 7 m above the adjacent ground. Alternatively, a balcony can be provided at the storey not provided with an exit in order to meet this requirement.

Windows designated as escape windows must be large enough to facilitate as an alternative means of escape. Therefore, at least one window on a floor that contains bedrooms must have an unobstructed open portion having a minimum area of 0.35 m² with no dimension less than 380 mm for emergency exiting. It must also be openable from the inside without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge such as removing any portion of the window. This window acts as an emergency escape for persons on that floor and they must not be delayed in moving to a safe place.

