

**CHAPTER 3
BUILDING PLANNING**

**SECTION R310.1
IRC Interpretation No. 28-04
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R310.1 Emergency escape and rescue required. Basements with habitable space and every sleeping room shall have at least one openable emergency escape and rescue window or exterior door opening for emergency escape and rescue. Where openings are provided as a means of escape and rescue 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 window or door opening from the inside. Escape and rescue window openings with a finished sill height below the adjacent ground elevation shall be provided with a window well in accordance with Section R310.2.



Q: In a second story sleeping room, are emergency escape and rescue windows permitted if removal of both the bottom and top sash is required to achieve the minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet?

A: No. The required opening size must be achieved through normal operation of the window without the removal of the top or bottom sash. Section R310.1 specifically states, "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." While most occupants are familiar with the normal operation by which to open the window, children and guests are frequently unfamiliar with special procedures necessary to remove the sashes. The time spent comprehending the special operation unnecessarily delays egress from the bedroom and could lead to panic and further confusion. Thus, windows that achieve the required opening dimensions only by having a special sequence of operations performed upon them, such as the removal of sashes or mullions, are not permitted.
