

**CHAPTER 3
BUILDING PLANNING**

**SECTION R310.1
IRC Interpretation No. 05-08
2003 Edition
Issued: 05-20-2008
RE_03_05_08**

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 opening. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency egress and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room, but shall not be required in adjoining areas of the basement. Where emergency escape and rescue openings are provided 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 310.3. 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. Emergency escape and rescue 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: A detached single-family dwelling contains a basement with both non-habitable space and habitable space. The habitable space is not a sleeping room. The non-habitable space is adjacent to and has access from the habitable space. In accordance with the provisions of Section 310.1 of the *International Residential Code*, can the emergency escape and rescue opening be located in the non-habitable space?

A: Yes. The provisions in Section R310.1 stipulate that at least one openable emergency escape and rescue opening must be provided in basements with habitable space. There is no provision that requires the emergency escape and rescue opening to be located in the habitable space. The language very specifically requires an emergency escape and rescue opening in every sleeping room; however, emergency escape and rescue openings are not required in areas, habitable or non-habitable, adjoining sleeping rooms. Therefore, in other than sleeping rooms, access to the emergency escape and rescue opening can be from any area in a basement.