



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
Office of State Fire Marshal
52 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0052

PAUL R. LePAGE
GOVERNOR

JOHN E. MORRIS
COMMISSIONER

JOSEPH THOMAS
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

October 17, 2013


Re: Policy for clarification of existing egress windows

From: Joseph Thomas

Effective November 1, 2013, the following will be the policy for egress windows within existing buildings. Any building constructed after 1976 shall be required to comply with the requirement to provide 5.7 sq. ft. of net clear opening with a minimum width of 20" and minimum height of 24". The window shall also meet all other requirements for egress windows contained in the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code. Any replacement windows installed in a building constructed after 1976 shall be required to meet the net clear opening of 5.7 sq.ft. This shall be measured with the window in it's natural open position.

Any building constructed before 1976 will be allowed to meet the following specifications. The net clear opening would be allowed to meet the minimum 20" in width and 24" in height with a total net clear opening of 3.3 sq.ft; if the window is constructed of wood or vinyl and the overall window sash size meets a minimum of 5.0 sq. ft. The window shall meet all other requirements for an egress window as specified in the NFPA 101 Life safety Code as adopted by the Office of State Fire Marshal. Any replacement window installed in a building constructed prior to 1976 shall meet the same requirements as the existing windows and shall not reduce the existing net clear opening below the minimum requirements.

Any existing window that has been previously approved will be allowed to continue in use. This policy does not prevent a local jurisdiction from adopting a more restrictive policy under an ordinance or life safety policy.



Joseph Thomas
State Fire Marshal

PREVENTION * MITIGATION/ SUPPRESSION * LAW ENFORCEMENT

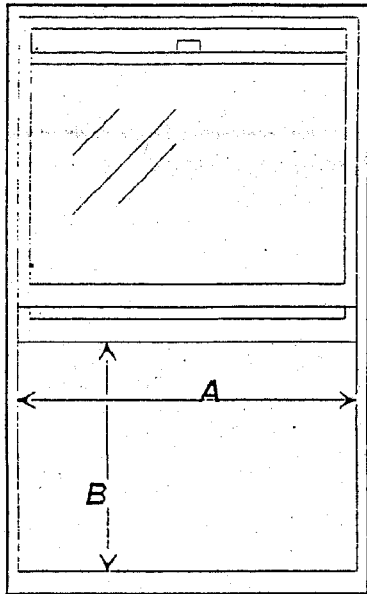
OFFICES LOCATED AT: 45 COMMERCE DRIVE, AUGUSTA, MAINE 04330

(207) 626-3870 ADMINISTRATION/ INVESTIGATIONS
(207) 626-3880 INSPECTIONS/ PLANS REVIEW

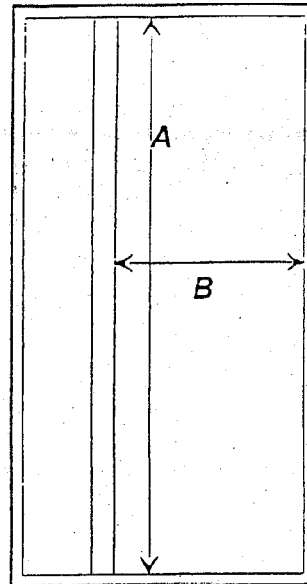
(207) 287-3659 TDD

(207) 287-6251 FAX

THE EGRESS WINDOW



double-hung



casement

When the window is in the normal open position the opening must be at least 5.7 square feet in area.

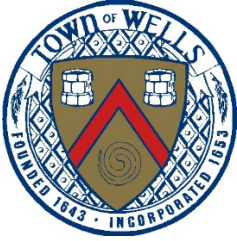
A times B must equal at least 820.8 square inches.

The width of the opening must be at least 20 inches.

The height of the opening must be at least 24 inches.

20 x 24 only equals 480 square inches, not enough.

32 x 26 = 832 square inches. 832 divided by 144 equals 5.7777 square feet.



Town of Wells, Maine Code Enforcement Office

208 Sanford RD, Wells, Maine 04090
Voice: (207) 646-5187
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Date: 07/17/2025

Egress Window Requirements/Clarifications

Buildings constructed after 1976 must have

- 5.7 sq. ft. minimum of net clear opening with a minimum of 20" in width and 24" in height
- All replacement windows must meet 5.7 sq. ft. of net clear opening
- Net clear opening is the actual unobstructed space available through a window or door for emergency escape and rescue measured when the window is in its natural open position.

Buildings constructed prior to 1976

- 3.3 sq. ft. minimum of net clear opening with an overall sash size of 5.0 sq. ft. or larger
- Must be a minimum of 20" in width and 24" in height

All buildings

- The bottom of the opening shall not be more than 44 inches from the floor
- The window shall be within 20 feet of the ground
- Windows with a sill height below grade shall have a window well

R312.2.1 Window opening height

In dwelling units, where the bottom of the clear opening of an operable window opening is located less than 24 inches above the finished floor and greater than 72 inches above the finished grade or other surface below on the exterior of the building, the operable window shall comply with one of the following:

1. Operable window openings will not allow a 4-inch-diameter (102 mm) sphere to pass through where the openings are in their largest open position.
2. Operable windows are provided with window opening control devices or fall prevention devices that comply with [ASTM F2090](#)

Common areas for tempered glass

- Within 60 inches of a shower
- Near doors and staircases
- Windows with sills below 18 inches