

# Basement Rescue Egress Windows & Area Wells

## Code Requirements

NOTE: An egress window must be located in the room that it serves. For example, if an egress window is installed to serve a bedroom, then it must be located in that bedroom.

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### SPS 321.03 (5) EXITS FROM BASEMENTS AND GROUND FLOORS.

(a) General Except as provided in par (b), all basements and ground floors shall be provided with at least one exit of the following types:

1. A door to the exterior of the dwelling.
2. A stairway or ramp that leads to the floor above.

(b) Basements and ground floors used for sleeping.

1. Basements and ground floors used for sleeping shall be provided with at least 2 exits.
2. The exits shall be located as far apart as practical.
3. The exits may not be accessed from the same ramp or stairway.
4. In addition to the exit type required under par. (a), the second exit from a basement or ground floor used for sleeping shall be one of the following types:
  - a. A door to the exterior of the dwelling.
  - b. A stairway or ramp that leads to the floor above.
  - c. A stairway that leads to a garage provided the garage has an exit door other than the overhead door.
  - d. An egress window that complies with sub (6), located in each bedroom.

(6) WINDOWS USED FOR EXITING. Windows that are installed for exit purposes shall comply with the requirements of this subsection.

- (a) The window shall be openable from the inside without the use of tools or the removal of a sash. If equipped with a storm or screen, it shall be openable from the inside.
- (b)(1) The nominal size of the net clear window opening shall be at least 20 inches by 24 inches irrespective of height or width. Nominal dimensions shall be determined by rounding up fractions of inches if they are ½-inch or greater or rounding down fractions of inches if they are less than ½-inch.
- (2) No portion of the window, including stops, stools, meeting rails and operator arms, shall infringe on the required opening.
- (c) The area and dimension requirements of par. (b) may be infringed on by a storm window.

- (d)(1) For any window used for exiting, the lowest point of clear opening shall be no more than 60 inches above the floor.
  - (2) If the lowest point of clear opening is more than 46 inches above the floor, a permanent platform or fixture shall be installed such that a flat surface at least 20 inches wide and 9 inches deep is located no more than 46 inches directly below the clear opening.
  - (3) The topmost surface of the platform or fixture shall be no more than 24 inches above the floor.
  - (4) The topmost surface of the platform or fixture shall support a live load of a least 200 pounds.
  - (5) A step used for the sole purpose of reaching the top of the platform or fixture is exempt from the requirements of s. SPS 321.04. (Rise/run requirements)
- (e)(1) An egress window with any point of clear opening below adjacent grade shall be provided with an areaway in accordance with this section.
  - (2) The width of the areaway shall be at least equal to the width of the window.
  - (3) The areaway shall be a minimum of 36 inches measured perpendicular from the outer surface of the below-grade wall.
  - (4) If the bottom of the areaway is more than 46 inches below adjacent grade or the top of the areaway enclosure, the areaway shall be provided with a ladder or at least on additional step to aid egress. Steps used to comply with this section are exempt from the requirements of s. SPS 321.04.
  - (5) Ladders or other steps used to comply with subd. 4. may infringe on the required area of the areaway by a maximum of 6 inches.
  - (6) The areaway shall be constructed such that water entering the areaway does not enter the dwelling.
- (f) An egress window under a deck or porch shall discharge through a clear path of at least 36 inches in height and 36 inches in width, and no more than 15 feet in length, to a yard or open space.

**Question:** *Are there State-approved manufactured areaways that meet the UDC code requirement or are equivalent?*

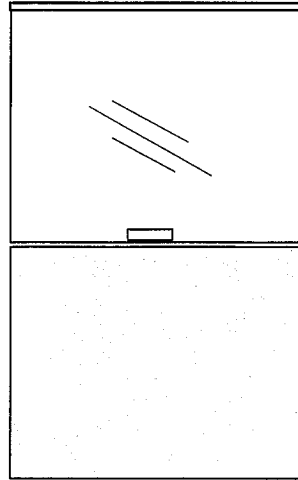
**Answer:** *Yes, to date, two manufacturers have applied for and been granted approvals for egress window areaways that meet the intent of the code. Some of these have "ledges or stepped terraces" that do not meet SPS 321.04 for stairs, but act as an aid to exiting. They have been granted even when the wall furthest away from the house (which may have stepped ledges in it) do not measure 36" out from the house.*

# SPS 321.03 (6)

## Egress Window Dimensions

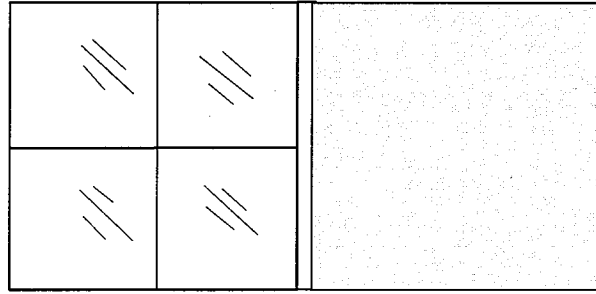
Minimum  
20" wide x 24" high  
or  
24" wide x 20" high

SLIDER

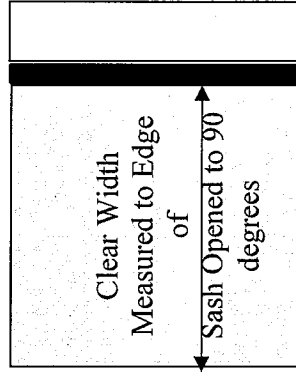


MAX 46" IF NO  
STEPS OR  
PLATFORM

DOUBLE HUNG



CASEMENT



MAX 60"  
WITH STEP  
OR  
PLATFORM

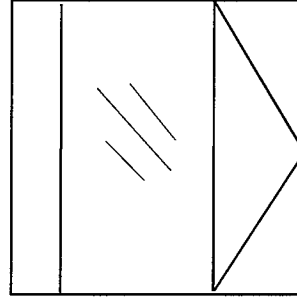
UP TO 46"

MAX 24"

Permanent  
Step(s) or  
Platform - Min. 9"

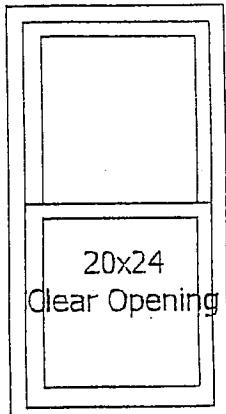
MIN 20" WIDE

AWNING

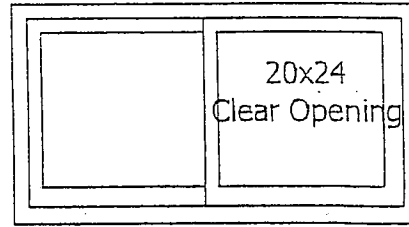


Not Acceptable Due  
To Operator Arms in  
Opening

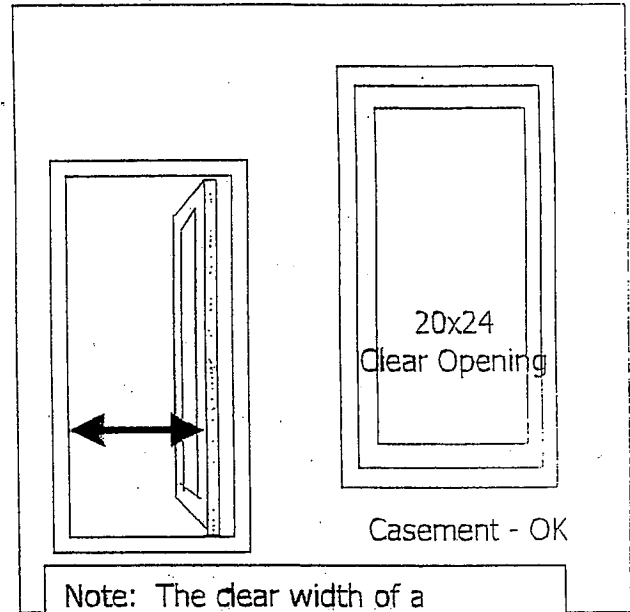
# Egress Window Types



Double Hung - OK



Slide-by - OK

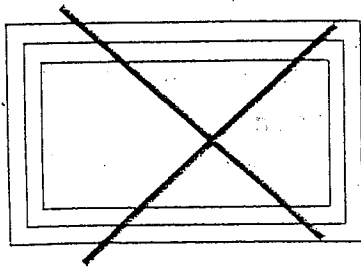


Casement - OK

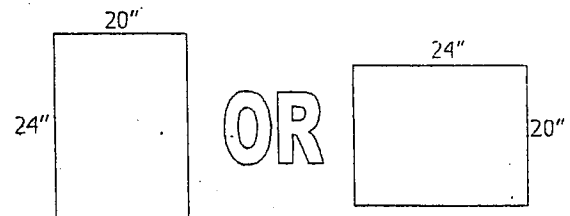
**NATURAL LIGHT:** When you are choosing an egress window, keep this additional requirement in mind.

A basement sleeping room must have natural light (glass area) equal to 8% of floor area. Be sure the glass area of your egress window is big enough to provide that much light.

**Note:** The clear width of a casement window is measured from stop to sash with the window open to 90 degrees.

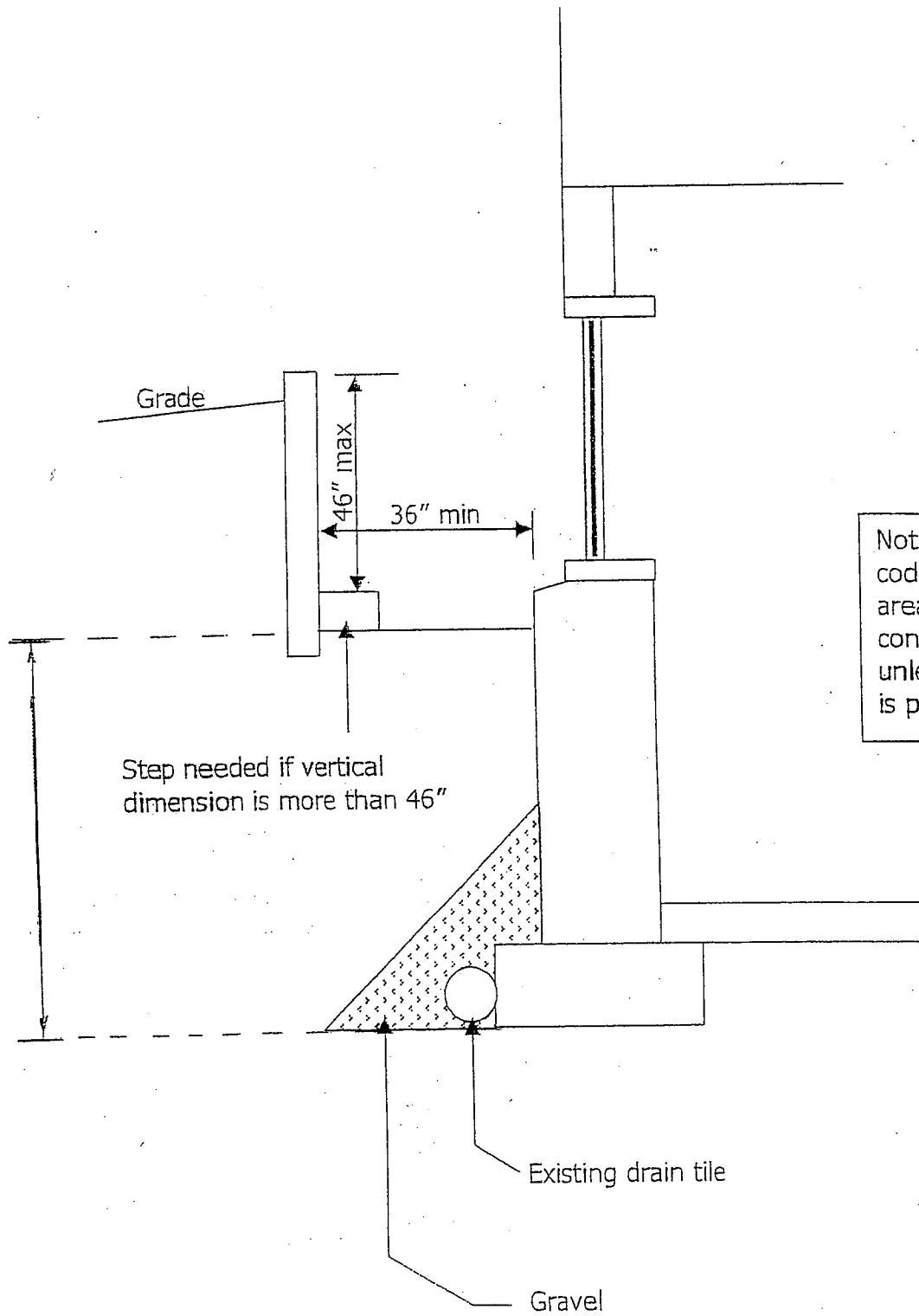


Awning Window **NOT OK**  
An awning window is not legal for use as an egress window



A egress window must have a clear opening of at least 20x24 inches, measured from stop to stop and from sash to sill. Either orientation is acceptable.

# Areawell Dimensions



Note: The plumbing code requires that an areawell be properly connected to drain tile unless a watertight cover is provided.