WEB BASED
APPLICATION SPECIFIC
INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

Egress and Safety

Although all possible measures have been taken to insure the accuracy of the material presented,
WIXSYS, and the author are not liable and do not assume any liability in case
of misinterpretation of directions, misapplication, improper installation, or typographical error.

Codes and Requirements

Permitting Requirements for Replacement Windows

Each state, and even each municipality, can have their own requirements for permitting when windows and doors are replaced in a home. Historically, Replacement Windows have been "grand-fathered" meaning if the size and structure of the opening remains unchanged, replacement windows do not require permitting.

Vinyl Framed Windows can Make Clear Openings Smaller Requiring Permits

There are requirements, though, in most municipalities with regard to egress (ability to exit/escape a room in case of emergency) and glazing (tempered glazing requirements for safety) even for same-size replacement.

Vinyl windows can pose a unique problem in that size for size, the framing of a vinyl window can reduce both the visible glass area and the opening size over comparably sized aluminum or wood windows. Because of this unique situation, vinyl windows used in bedrooms and other locations where egress requirements were satisfied by an old metal or wood window, will not satisfy egress requirements possibly triggering changing the opening size and, therefore, require a permit.

There are options. Hinged windows offer a greater clear opening than a double hung or slider. When replacing an old double hung or slider in an egress situation, and the recommended vinyl window will make the clear opening smaller, you can recommend a casement window. The casement window will provide the proper egress opening size and avoid the permitting requirement.

Cities in California, New York, Florida, Connecticut, Minnesota, Washington, New Hampshire, and Colorado (among others) require permitting for replacement windows — even size for size. Final inspections are, therefore, also required. Their code requirements center around egress and glazing issues for same-size installation, and obviously construction for changed openings or changed styles within an existing opening.

Some areas require permitting to allow for installation inspection. Florida requires installation of replacement windows to meet code mandated installation criteria. Laguna Woods, California, while no permit is required (yet), the window installer for replacement windows must file a "Replacement Window Certification" with the town containing a description of the product(s) and their location as an assurance that the installer is aware of the code requirements of "Light and Ventilation", "Escape and Rescue", and "Window Glazing".

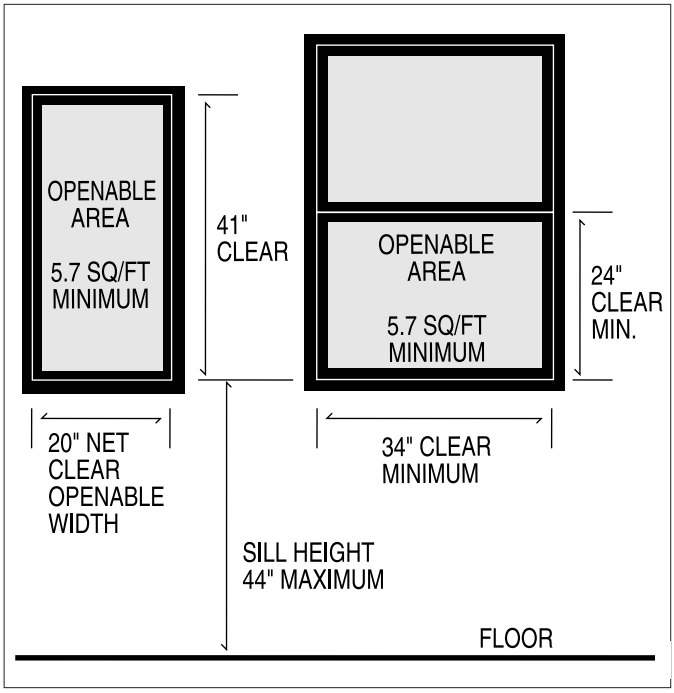
It is important to seek out the requirements in the location where your window client resides. You should be familiar with the local prevailing code affecting windows and doors to properly advise your client as to the proper product for each application.

Contents © 2004-14 Do not reproduce without permission

Egress

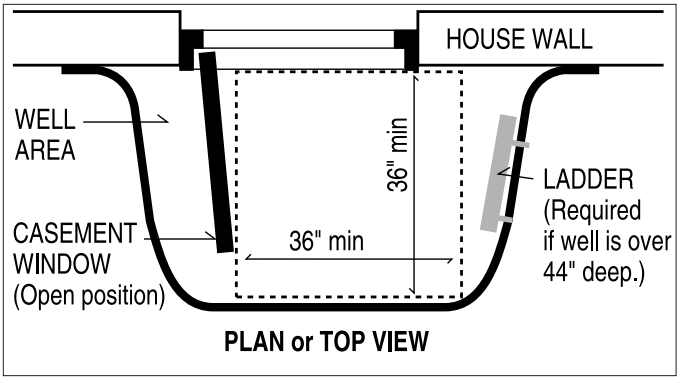
The requirements for egress will apply to all bedrooms, and/or other types of sleeping rooms. The basic national code state that all sleeping rooms will have at least one egress window meeting all of these requirements:

- Sill height shall not be more than 44 inches above the floor
- Emergency escape windows shall be operational from inside the room without the use of keys or tools
- The Openable (clear) area shall not be less than 5.7 square feet (820 square inches)
- The opening height shall not be less than 24 inches
- The opening width shall not be less than 20 inches.



Escape from Window Wells Below Grade

Many replacement opportunities are present in basement windows which often deteriorate to a greater degree than other windows because they are below grade.



In certain locations, basement windows will require:

- The clear horizontal dimensions shall allow the window to be fully opened and provide a minimum accessible net clear opening of 9 square feet
- The accessible opening shall have no dimension smaller than 36 inches.

When decks have been added above basement windows, additional requirements may be applicable such as a minimum height clearance of 48 inches shall be maintained above the exterior grade.

Glazing Safety

Tempered (safety) glass is required for all exterior doors and in many window applications, as well:

- All glass within 24 inches of either side of an exterior must be safety glass
- Glass within 18 inches of the walking surface and greater than 9 square feet for any single pane must be safety glass
- Any glazing installed within the bathing area less than 5 feet high from the drain must be safety glazed
- Any glazing within 5 feet of the top or bottom of a stairway must be safety glass
- All transoms or other windows above entry doors must be safety glass

Safety Glass is Required Near Doors, Walkways and Stairways

Be sure you are familiar with all the local code requirements.

Contents © 2004-14 Do not reproduce without permission