



New Castle County Government Center
87 Reads Way
New Castle, DE 19720
Department of Land Use - Building Inspections

Date: **November 15, 2006**
Subject: **Opening size for emergency escape and rescue openings**
References: **2003 International Residential Code**

This Staff Code Interpretation is intended to be used to clarify Sections R310.1 of the International Residential Code.

Below is the exact text from the sections of the codes in question:

Section 310.1, 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 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 require 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.

Question: When measuring casement type windows for egress, can the net clear opening occur at any point during the operation of the window or must it be in the full open position; indicating that the window be opened to 90 degrees from the closed position.

Answer: The code requires the net clear opening dimensions to be obtained by the normal operation of the window. There is no mention that the net clear opening dimension must be obtained when the window is in the full open position. If the net clear opening dimension is obtained at some point during the normal operation of the window, then I believe you are in compliance with this section.

STAFF CODE INTERPRETATION

Code Updates: While Section R310 of the IRC has been entirely reorganized with the adoption of the 2015 IRC, this code opinion remains valid.

George O. Haggerty
Code Official

STAFF CODE INTERPRETATION