Emergency Escape and Rescue

**CRC Section R310.1.** Basements, habitable attics and every sleeping room shall have not less than one operable emergency escape and rescue opening. Where basements contain one or more sleeping room, emergency escape and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall open directly into a public way or to a yard or court that opens to a public way.

**CRC Section R310.2.1.** Emergency and escape rescue openings shall have a net clear opening of not less than 5.7 square feet. The net clear height shall be not less than 24 inches and the net clear width shall be not less than 20 inches.

**Exception:** Grade floor openings shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5 sq. ft.

**Grade Floor Opening.** A window or other opening located such that the sill height of the opening is not more than 44 inches above or below the finished ground level adjacent to the opening.

**CRC Section R310.2.2.** Where a window is provided as the emergency escape and rescue opening, it shall have the bottom of the clear opening not greater than 44 inches measured from the floor; where the sill height is below grade, it shall be provided with a window well in accordance with **Section R310.2.3.**

**Exceptions:**
1. Storm shelters and basements used only to house mechanical equipment not exceeding a total floor area of 200 square feet.
2. Replacement windows see Document RS-22.1 “Window Replacement Policy.”

**Example:**
R310.2.3 Window Wells. The minimum horizontal area of the window well shall be 9 square feet with a minimum horizontal projection and width of not less than 36 inches. The area of the window well shall allow the emergency escape and rescue opening to be fully opened.

Exception: The ladder or steps required by Section R310.2.3.1 shall be permitted to encroach not more than 6 inches into the required dimensions of the window well.

R310.2.3.1. Ladder and Steps. Window wells with a vertical depth greater than 44 inches shall be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with the window in the fully open position. Ladders or steps required by this Section shall not be required to comply with Section R311.7 and R311.8. Ladders or rungs shall have an inside width of not less than 12 inches, shall project not less than 3 inches from the wall and shall be spaced not more than 18” inches on center vertically for the full height of the window well.