

2020 NYS Codes for FINISHED BASEMENTS IN EXISTING BUILDINGS

SECTION R310 EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE OPENINGS

R310.1 Emergency escape and rescue opening required. *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 rooms, an emergency escape and rescue opening 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.

Exceptions:

1. Storm shelters and *basements* used only to house mechanical *equipment* not exceeding a total floor area of 200 square feet.

2. Where the *dwelling* or *townhouse* is equipped with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section P2904, sleeping rooms in basements shall not be required to have emergency escape and rescue openings provided that the basement has one of the following:

2.1. One means of egress complying with Section R311 and one emergency escape and rescue opening.

2.2. Two means of egress complying with Section R311.

R310.1.1 Operational constraints and opening control devices. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall be operational from the inside of the room without the use of keys, tools or special knowledge.

R310.2 Emergency escape and rescue openings. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall have minimum dimensions as specified in this section.

R310.2.1 Minimum opening area. Emergency escape and rescue openings shall have a net clear opening of not less than 5.7 square feet. The net clear opening dimensions required by this section shall be obtained by the normal operation of the emergency escape and rescue opening from the inside. The net clear height of the opening shall be not less than 24 inches and the net clear width shall be not less than 20 inches.

Exception: *Grade floor openings* or *below-grade* openings shall have a net clear opening area of not less than 5 square feet.

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

R310.2.3 Window wells. The horizontal area of the window well shall be not less than 9 square feet, with a 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. 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.

R310.2.3.2 Drainage. Window wells shall be designed for proper drainage by connecting to the building's foundation drainage system required by Section R405.1 or by an approved alternative method.

Exception: A drainage system for window wells is not required where the foundation is on well-drained soil or sand-gravel mixture soils

R310.2.4 Emergency escape and rescue openings under decks and porches.

Emergency escape and rescue openings installed under decks and porches shall be fully openable and provide a path not less than 36 inches in height to a *yard* or court.

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R310.2.5 Replacement windows. Replacement windows installed in buildings meeting the scope of this code shall be exempt from the maximum sill height requirements of Section R310.2.2 and the requirements of Section R310.2.1, provided that the replacement window meets the following conditions:

1. The replacement window is the manufacturer's largest standard size window that will fit within the existing frame or existing rough opening. The replacement window is of the same operating style as the existing window or a style that provides for an equal or greater window opening area than the existing window.
2. The replacement window is not part of a change of occupancy.

R310.3 Emergency escape and rescue doors.

Where a door is provided as the required emergency escape and rescue opening, it shall be a side-hinged door or a slider. Where the opening is below the adjacent grade, it shall be provided with an area well.

R310.3.1 Minimum door opening size.

The minimum net clear height opening for any door that serves as an emergency and escape rescue opening shall be in accordance with Section R310.2.1.

R310.3.2 Area wells.

Area wells shall have a width of not less than 36 inches. The area well shall be sized to allow the emergency escape and rescue door to be fully opened.

R310.3.2.1 Ladder and steps.

Area wells with a vertical depth greater than 44 inches shall be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or steps usable with the door in the fully open position. Ladders or steps required by this section shall not be required to comply with Section R311.7. 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 exterior stairwell.

R310.3.2.2 Drainage.

Area wells shall be designed for proper drainage by connecting to the building's foundation drainage system required by Section R405.1 or by an *approved* alternative method.

Exception: A drainage system for area wells is not required where the foundation is on well-drained soil or sand-gravel mixture

R310.4 Bars, grilles, covers and screens.

Where bars, grilles, covers, screens or similar devices are placed over emergency escape and rescue openings, area wells, or window wells, the minimum net clear opening size shall comply with Sections R310.2.1 through R310.2.3, and such devices shall be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, special knowledge or force greater than that required for the normal operation of the escape and rescue opening.

Ceiling Height Requirement – Minimum Ceiling Height for habitable space in basements shall be 6'ft., 8" inches from finished floor, beams girders, duct and other obstruction may project to within 6'ft. 4" inches of the finished floor.

SMOKE ALARMS and CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS – will be required in every sleeping room, one unit outside sleeping unit and one on every floor.