



CITY OF PORTLAND
Permitting and Inspections Department
Secondary Means of Escape and Rescue Openings

Background:

The City of Portland has adopted NFPA 101 Life Safety Code, NFPA 1 Fire Code, MUBEC, along with other building codes, which have minimum requirements for means of escape from residential dwellings.

NFPA 101 requires that new and existing dwellings provide for both a primary and a secondary means of escape from each sleeping room and living area. [1] NFPA 101 (2009) § 24.2.2.1.1.

Note: There are two exceptions to this rule. [2] NFPA 101 (2009) § 24.2.2.1.2 (1) (2) A window may be used as a secondary means of egress or escape when it meets the qualifications.

The City reserves the right to require installation or replacement of any window to meet the safety requirements of NFPA 101, NFPA 1, MUBEC, City of Portland Code of Ordinances, and any other relevant standards.

Existing Escape Windows:

Windows installed in structures built before 1976

The City approves existing windows if they meet ALL of the following specifications:

- Normal operation net clear opening of not less than 3.3sq. ft;
- Overall opening of 5.0 square feet with all window sashes removed;
- Operable from the inside without the use of tools, keys, or special effort;
- The net clear opening during normal operation shall be no less than 20” wide;
- The net clear opening during normal operation shall be no less than 24” high;
- The bottom of the window is not more than 44” above the floor.

Windows installed in structures built in 1976 or after

The City approves existing windows if they meet ALL of the following specifications:

- Normal operation net clear opening of not less than 5.7 square feet;
- Operable from the inside without the use of tools, keys, or special effort;
- The net clear opening during normal operation shall be no less than 20” wide;
- The net clear opening during normal operation shall be no less than 24” high;
- The bottom of the window is not more than 44” above the floor.

Renovations or Projects:

Where a renovation or project in a building built before 1976 involves new window openings, or a change in the rough opening size of an existing window, the new windows must be installed to meet all of the requirements of a window installed after 1976.

Adopted 2/2/2018