

ADVISORY

EGRESS WINDOWS FOR FLOOR LEVELS CONTAINING A BEDROOM

BUILDING CODE SERVICES



PURPOSE

This advisory provides direction regarding the application and interpretation of the Ontario Building Code (OBC) requirements with respect to required egress windows for floor areas serving bedrooms.

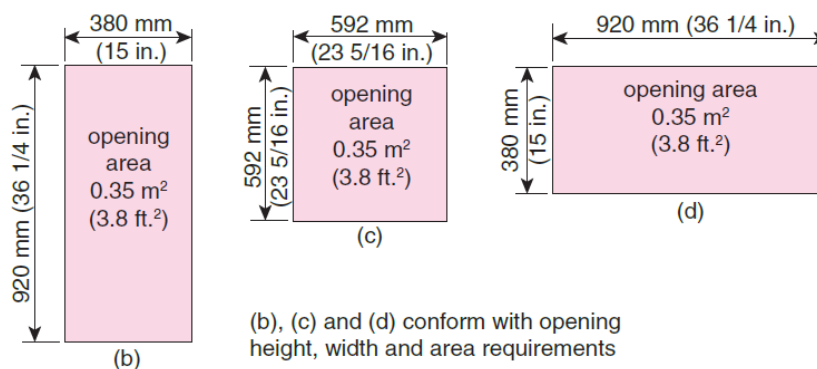
GUIDELINE

Where a window is identified as an egress as required by article 9.9.10.1, the outside or exterior window requirements are listed below:

- in a fully open position provide an individual, unobstructed open portion having a minimum area of 0.35 m^2 with no dimension less than 380 mm,
- be openable from the inside without the use of tools,
- maintain the required opening without the need for additional support,
- have a maximum sill height of 1000 mm above the floor, except for basement areas. A window with a sill height exceeding 1000 mm may be achieved by providing stairs, built in cabinets or counters, and
- have a clearance of 550 mm in front of the window with continued egress out of the window well. Where the window well is **more** than 1000 mm deep a method of assisting the occupant in egress will be necessary.

Egress Window Access via Built-In Cabinets

Although the OBC does not stipulate a distance between built-in cabinets and the basement egress window, it is recommended that the vertical distance from the top of the cabinet to the egress window not exceed 1000 mm.



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Figure 1-Figures taken from 2020 NBC Appendix.

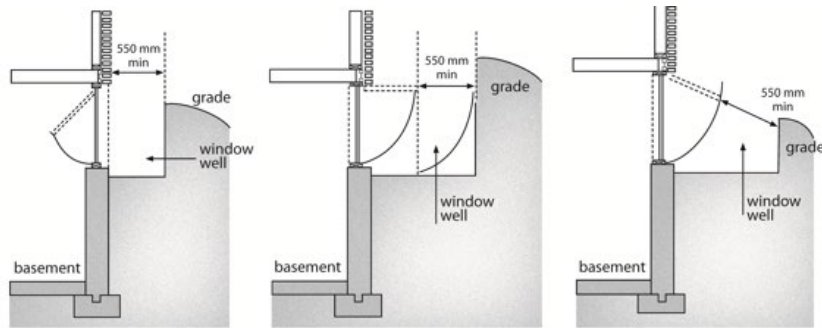


Figure 2-Figure taken from 2024 OBC Appendix.

WINDOW LIMITERS / WINDOW OPENING CONTROL DEVICES (WOCD)

Within a dwelling unit, all openable windows require a guard, a restrictor, or a sill height located greater than 900mm above the floor for buildings regulated under Part 9 and 1070 mm for buildings regulated under Part 3. Windows with a sill height less than 1800 mm above exterior grade are exempt from the guard and window restrictor requirements as stated in OBC Div B 9.8.8.1.(5).

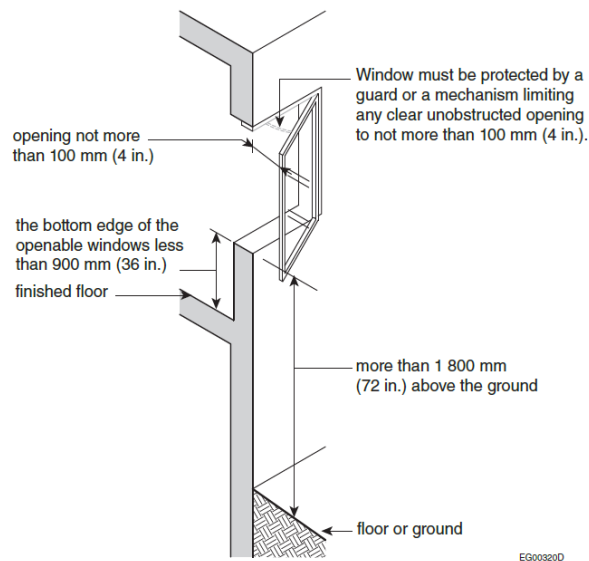


Figure 3-Figure taken from 2020 NBC Illustrated User's Guide.

The use of window limiters in relation to egress windows is governed by two distinct sets of requirements, based on the height of the window sill:

- **Sill height less than 900 mm:** A window limiter is required, but it must be capable of being bypassed without the use of tools. (Reference: 9.8.8.1.(4)(5) and 9.9.10.1.(1))
- **Sill height between 900 mm and 1000 mm:** A window limiter is not required. (Reference: 9.9.10.1.(1))

Industry practitioners are advised the definition of a window limiters found in ASTM F2090 states, *the device that controls a window sash opening to be opened with the normal operation of the sash such as to prohibit the free passage of a 4" diameter (100 mm) rigid sphere at the lowest openable portion of the window opening, with a release mechanism that shall allow the sash to be opened to a larger opening such as that required for emergency escape and rescue, and that automatically resets when the window sash is fully closed.*

The OBC Appendix Note A-9.8.8.1 (4) refers to ASTM F2090 "Standard Specification for Window Fall Prevention Devices with Emergency Escape (Egress) Release Mechanisms" as a way of providing the protection required in 9.8.8.1 (4) (b) and (5).

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Edition	Effective Date	Status	Comment
Original	Aug. 2025	Active	Reviewed and reissued under 2024 OBC O.Reg.203/24 as amended under O.Reg.163/24

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

2024 ONTARIO BUILDING CODE

DIVISION B

PART 9 – HOUSING AND SMALL BUILDINGS

9.9.10.1 – Egress Windows or Doors for Bedrooms

9.8.8.1. – Required Guards

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

ASTM F2090 "Standard Specification for Window Fall Prevention Devices with Emergency Escape (Egress) Release Mechanisms"

2020 National Building Code of Canada (and Appendix)