



Government of the District of Columbia  
Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

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## Interpretation of Regulations Document

2018-002

### Emergency Egress Windows

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#### References:

- Sections 1029, Tables 1021.2(1) and (2) International Building Code 2012 edition as amended by DCMR12
- 1029.1 General. In addition to the means of egress required by this chapter, provisions shall be made for emergency escape and rescue openings in Group R-2 occupancies in accordance with Tables 1021.2(1) and 1021.2(2) and Group R-3 occupancies. Basements and sleeping rooms below the fourth story above grade plane shall have at least one exterior emergency escape and rescue opening in accordance with this section. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency escape and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room, but shall not be required in adjoining areas of the basement. Such openings shall open directly into a public way or to a yard or court that opens to a public way.

#### Exceptions:

1. Basements with a ceiling height of less than 80 inches (2032 mm) shall not be required to have emergency escape and rescue openings.
2. Emergency escape and rescue openings are not required from basements or sleeping rooms that have an exit door or exit access door that opens directly into a public way or to a yard, court or exterior exit balcony that opens to a public way.
3. Basements without habitable spaces and having no more than 200 square feet (18.6 m<sup>2</sup>) in floor area shall not be required to have emergency escape and rescue openings.

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In a Group R-2 building containing dwelling units where the building is required to have 2 exits on each floor, emergency escape and rescue openings are not required. Section 1029.1 requires emergency escape and rescue openings in Group R-2 occupancies in accordance with Tables 1021.2(1) and 1021.2(2) and Group R-3 occupancies. Group R-2 buildings utilizing the stories with on exit provisions in Tables 1021.2(1) and 1021.2(2) are required to have emergency escape and rescue openings. In Group R-2 buildings that have 2 exits from each story emergency escape and rescue openings are not required.

While the language in the 2012 edition is a bit obscure, the language and clear direction in the 2018 edition is much clearer. This interpretation is simply a means of explaining the intent of this code stipulation.

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