Emergency Escape/Egress Window Policy

Applies to
State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) personnel and approved local inspectors for licensed facilities

Purpose
To provide guidance for conditions that occur in Minnesota with escape windows (also known as egress windows) outside the scope of the Minnesota State Fire Code (MSFC). This policy does not affect the life safety provided by escape windows.

MSFC
Where required, emergency escape windows shall comply with MSFC requirements for new residential occupancies, existing residential occupancies constructed after July 1, 1972, and Minnesota licensed residential occupancies. See SFMD information sheet on egress windows.

Policy

Escape window opening height
- Escape windows with openings up to 52 inches off the floor may meet the height requirement for existing buildings by:
  - Securing a step, platform or bed to the wall directly underneath the window.
    - This step, platform or bed shall be no more than 44 inches below the opening and must be strong enough to support the weight of the person.
    - The minimum acceptable width shall be the same as the window opening.
    - The minimum acceptable depth away from the wall shall be 18 inches.

Coverings on escape windows
Due to climate conditions in Minnesota and lack of energy efficiency in older windows, the following is allowed for existing escape windows
- Plastic coverings are allowed on escape windows (and exterior doors) if the plastic covering meets the following requirements:
  - The plastic covering is readily transparent.
  - The occupant can see rescuers outside and rescuers can see people on the inside.
  - The plastic covering may only be attached on the inside and can only be attached to the window frame or structure with two-sided tape, hook and loop (Velcro) or static cling.
  - The plastic shall have enough material overhanging the attachment on all sides, top and bottom to facilitate grabbing it from any direction and allow easy removal.
Covers over window well openings
Window wells may be covered to keep them clear of debris, snow, and rain, and to help prevent people from falling in. The cover must comply with the following requirements:

- The covering does not interfere with the opening of the window in any way.
- The covering will be supported so it can’t freeze to the ground, window well or structure.
- The covering is removable without the use of tools or special knowledge of the window well area by the building occupants.