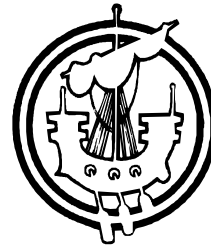


Building Standards

Please note that this leaflet is merely intended to provide supplementary guidance. Should you have any doubts about whether any work requires a building warrant or whether it complies with current regulations please consult the Building Standards Section at the number shown below.

Please also note that works of the nature included in this leaflet may still require a Building Warrant.

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Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Development Department
Sandwick Road
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2BW

Stornoway
Phone: 01851 822692

Balivanich
Phone: 01870 604990

Web: www.cne-siar.gov.uk

Escape Windows



The purpose of this leaflet is to provide additional guidance on the construction of Escape Windows in accordance with the current building regulations.

Please take one.

Should you need further assistance then please do not hesitate to contact one of our Building Standards officers.

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Balivanich
Phone: 01870 604990

Web: www.cne-siar.gov.uk

Escape Windows

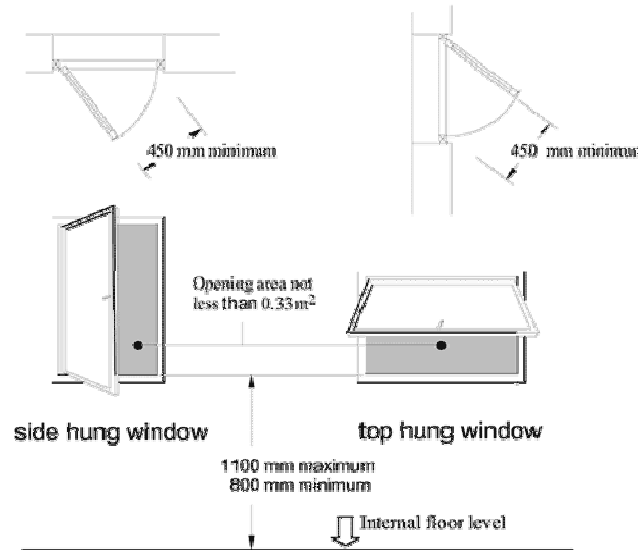
It is necessary for both new dwellings and any extensions, alterations, or conversions to homes to comply with the requirements for escape windows.

The normal means of escape from a dwelling in the event of a fire will be by way of the internal stairs or other circulation areas. In order to provide the occupants with early warning of the outbreak of fire, mains operated fire detection should be installed in circulation routes. The early detection of smoke should allow the occupants sufficient time to evacuate the building safely. However in some cases the circulation area may become impassable due to smoke or heat and openable windows large enough to escape through should be provided from every apartment from which the occupants could make their escape by lowering themselves from the window. The use of an escape window will be the last resort for the occupants and inevitably involves some risk. An escape window should be provided in every apartment on an upper storey at a height of not more than 4.5 m. In addition, escape windows should also be provided in every apartment that is an inner room on any storey at a height of not more than 4.5 m.

Escape windows are not necessary from apartments where there are alternative routes from the apartment to circulation areas or other rooms. This will allow the occupants an alternative route from the dwelling without entering the room or space of fire origin.

Size

Escape windows should be a window, or door (french window) situated in an external wall or roof; and having an unobstructed openable area that is at least 0.33 m^2 and at least 450 mm high and 450 mm wide (the route through the window may be at an angle rather than straight through). The bottom of the openable area should not be more than 1.1 m above the floor.



Hardware

Locks and safety fittings for many types of windows continue to present practical difficulties. This is because the design of the fittings needs to consider child safety, safe cleaning and security as well as escape in the event of a fire. At present there is no guidance provided on the type of lock or fastening that can provide both security and escape, and the occupants of dwellings can choose to fit devices most suitable for their situation. Devices that should be prohibited are permanent obstructions such as fixed security grills. The intention is to assist escape, but not to prohibit the use of locks, restrictors or other safety devices.

Conservatories below escape windows

The location of conservatories also presents some difficulties in relation to escape windows. Where a conservatory is located below an escape window consideration should be given to the design of the conservatory roof to withstand the loads exerted from occupants lowering themselves onto the roof in the event of a fire. However, the choice to construct a more robust roof and frame is a matter of preference and the decision to do this should remain with the owner.