



City of Seattle
Department of Planning & Development

2009 SBC Code Solution

Sec. 3404.1
Replacement of Bedroom Windows
Release Date: **February 25, 2011**

The following interpretation, policy or code alternate is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation, policy or code alternate to specific projects may vary.

Code Issue:

Are emergency escape windows required when windows are replaced?

Interpretation/Policy:

In existing legally established bedrooms where no code-compliant emergency escape window exists, one replacement window will be required to be upgraded under the following conditions:

1. Where the existing rough opening of the window will permit the installation of a window meeting the dimensional requirements of the code for emergency escape windows, one will be required. DPD does not require reframing the opening or cutting into foundation walls in order to accommodate the emergency escape window. However, the style of the window may need to be changed. For example, a casement window may be required to be installed instead of a double-hung window, AND
2. In one- and two-family dwellings, the window sill must be within 52" of the floor. If the sill is higher than that, and the building construction pre-dates the August 10, 1972 requirement for egress windows in bedrooms in the Seattle Housing Code, then the applicant is permitted to "replace in kind".
3. Bedrooms constructed or established after August 10, 1972 are required to be provided with fully code-compliant emergency escape windows.

Where only the glazing is being replaced, the window is not required to be upgraded to meet the emergency escape requirements.

This code solution assumes:

- The room has already been legally established as a bedroom



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Jonathan Siu, Principal Engineer

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- The window (including the window frame) in question is being replaced.

This code solution does not apply to:

- Basement windows that are not in a bedroom
- Projects that are establishing a new bedroom
- Projects where the rough opening is being altered

The 52" dimension is based on one 8" step plus the max. 44" sill height.

For questions about whether this code solution applies to your project:

- *If you have submitted a permit application, contact the Building Code plan reviewer assigned to your application*
- *If you have not submitted an application, contact DPD Building Code Technical Support at 206-684-4630 or in person at the Applicant Services Center. Visit the Applicant Services Center website for more information about hours and location http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Permits/Process_Overview/Location_Hours/default.asp*



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