

WINDOW FALL PREVENTION

2020 Minnesota Residential Code and Minnesota Statutes

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry

Background

In 2007, the Minnesota Legislature passed a law requiring that the State Building Code be amended to require that window fall prevention devices be installed in certain buildings (MS 326B.106 Subd.7). As a result, on July 1, 2009, the code was amended to require window fall prevention devices to be installed on certain windows in new one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses.

Legislative changes

During the 2021 Legislative special session, a law was passed amending Minnesota Statutes section 326B.106 subdivision 7, that establishes when window fall prevention devices are not required to be installed in one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses. This law went into effect on July 1, 2021.

The effect of the new 2021 law on the 2020 Minnesota Residential Code

The new law supersedes the 2020 Minnesota Residential Code requirements for window fall prevention devices. All references to sill heights of 36 inches are effectively replaced with 24 inches as shown below. The actual Minnesota Residential Code will be updated when the 2024 International Residential Code is adopted.



R312.2.1 Window sills.

In dwelling units, where the lowest part of the opening of an operable window is located more than 72 inches above the finished *grade* or surface below, the lowest part of the window opening shall be a minimum of **24 inches** above the finished floor of the room in which the window is located. Operable sections of windows shall not permit openings that allow passage of a 4-inch-diameter sphere where such openings are located within **24 inches** of the finished floor.

Exceptions:

1. Windows with openings that will not allow a 4-inch-diameter sphere to pass through the opening when the window is in its largest opened position.
2. Openings that are provided with window fall prevention devices that comply with ASTM F2090.
3. Windows that are provided with window opening control devices that comply with Section R312.2.2.
4. Replacement windows.

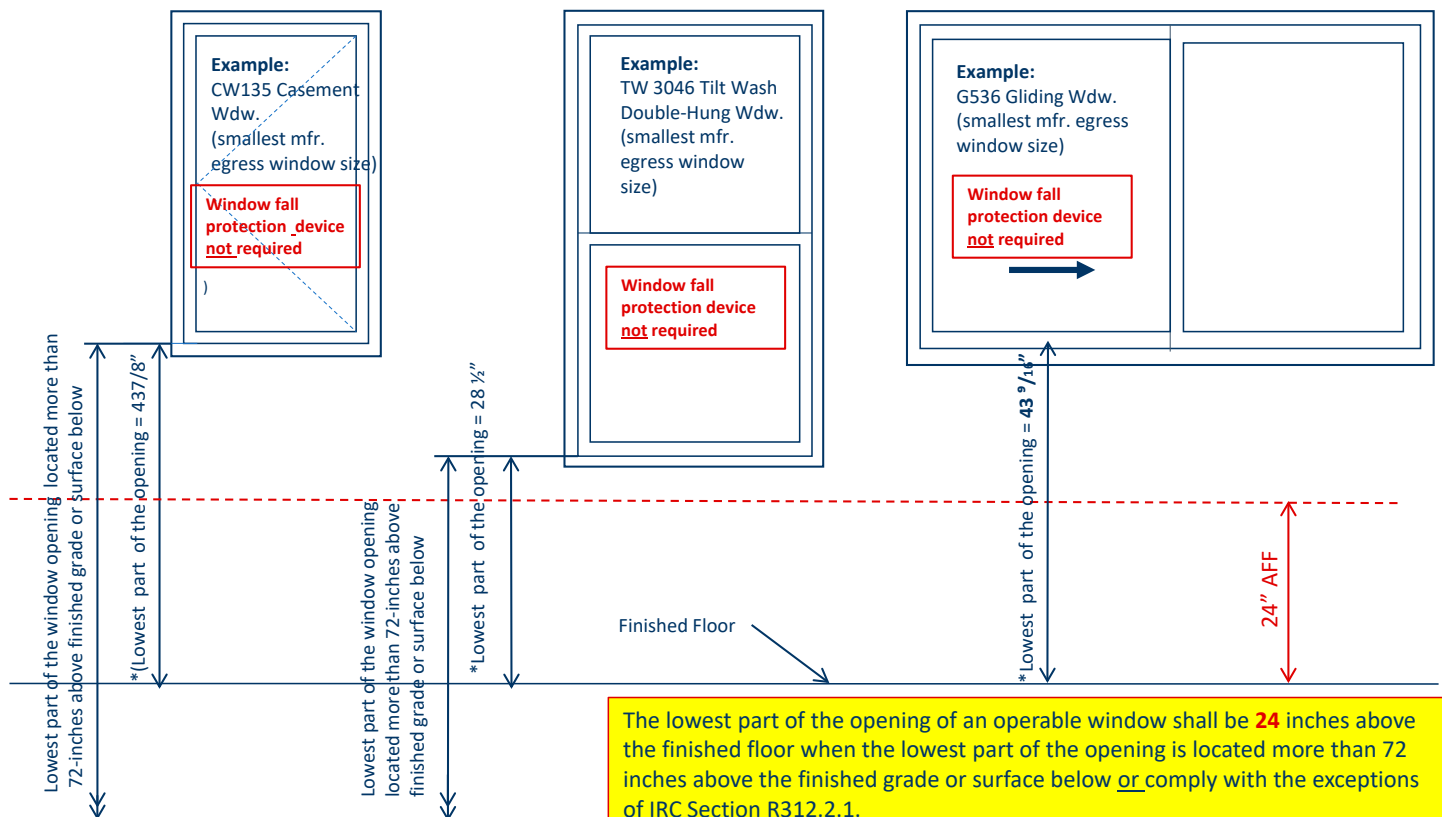
Illustrated explanation

Below are examples of casement, double-hung and glider window types that comply with minimum-size emergency escape and rescue openings required by code. These examples show when window fall prevention devices **are not** required for either type of window when the lowest part of the window opening is 72 inches or more above the grade or surface below **and** the lowest part of the window opening is 24 inches or more above the finished floor.

Other window sizes where the lowest part of the window opening is 72 inches or more above the grade or surface below **and** lower than 24 inches above the finished floor, require code complying window fall prevention devices. Window fall prevention devices must automatically reset after opening the window to the extent that a 4-inch-diameter sphere may pass through.

Window Fall Prevention

This drawing is not drawn to scale



Window Number Top of Subfloor to Top of Inside Sill Stop Inches

*TW3042 32 1/2"
*CW 135 43 7/8"

* From window manufactures product guide

The new law changed the sill height of 36" to 24".



Casement window



Double-hung window



Glider window

Window fall-prevention devices shown for example only (www.andersenwindows.com). Device styles and operation may vary by manufacturer.