



Surrey Building Control Guidance Note – Number 15



Fire Escape Windows

Two Storey Houses

Occupants of first floor habitable rooms are at risk if a fire starts at ground floor level or in an adjoining room. This risk is also present for occupants of ground floor habitable rooms whose only escape is through another room and a fire starts in that room.

The solution is to provide an external door or window that meets the following criteria :-

- It has an unobstructed openable area that is at least 0.33m² with no dimension being less than 450mm. A clear unobstructed opening 450mm wide by 750mm high would meet this criteria.
- The bottom of the openable area should be not more than 1100mm above the floor. In first floor rooms or ground floor rooms on steeply sloping sites they should also be no lower than 800mm unless precautions are taken to prevent falling risks.
- The opening should be sited so that the person escaping can reach a place free from any dangers from the fire. This is ideally a street or footpath but could include an enclosed garden as long as the garden is at least as deep as the height of the dwelling.

You may also need to consider the following:-

- The need for safety glass in critical locations.
- Security implications, as escape windows should be capable of use without the need for a key.

Loft Conversions

A fire escape window, that is accessible by an external ladder, is required, within the new room, when the roofspace of a two storey house is converted to a room.

Window size when open to be not less than 0.33 square metres with no dimension less than 450mm and sited so that the bottom of the opening is between 600mm and 1100mm above floor level.

For further information contact the Building Regulations Division

Please note that these guidance notes are for advice only and may not cover all situations. It is your responsibility to ensure that they are appropriate for use in your particular circumstance.