

## INFORMAL CODE INTERPRETATION

NC Department of Insurance  
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division  
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### Emergency Escape and Rescue Opening for Casement Windows

**Code:** 2012 Residential Code

**Date:** July 2, 2012

**Section:** R310

**Question:**

A particular casement window unit has two swinging sashes and one fixed pane between the two swinging sashes. At least one of the swinging sashes meets the code requirements for minimum height or width and net clear opening for an emergency escape and rescue opening. The mullions between the swinging sashes and the fixed pane are not vertical load bearing. Can the window unit as a whole be considered in the 5.0 sq. ft. first floor and 5.7 sq. ft. upper story glass area requirement or does each swinging sash or fixed pane have to be considered separately?

**Answer:**

The window unit can be considered as meeting the 5.0/5.7 sq. ft. requirement if in the estimation of the local inspector the mullion between the swinging sash and the fixed pane can be knocked out with a fireman's ax with no more effort than would be required to knock out a sash of a double hung window.

This interpretation would also apply if the window were just two swinging sashes without a glass pane separating the two sashes.

**Key Words:** basement, bonus room, bedroom, sleeping room, habitable space