

# Handrails & Guards

**1009.12 Handrails.** *Stairways* shall have *handrails* on each side and shall comply with [Section 1012](#).

**1012.2 Height.** *Handrail* height, measured above *stair tread nosings*, or finish surface of *ramp* slope, shall be uniform, not less than 34 inches (864 mm) and not more than 38 inches (965 mm).

**1012.3 Handrail graspability.** All required *handrails* shall comply with [Section 1012.3.1](#) or shall provide equivalent graspability.

**1012.3.1 Type I.** *Handrails* with a circular cross section shall have an outside diameter of at least 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (32 mm) and not greater than 2 inches (51 mm). If the *handrail* is not circular, it shall have a perimeter dimension of at least 4 inches (102 mm) and not greater than 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (160 mm) with a maximum cross-section dimension of 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (57 mm). Edges shall have a minimum radius of 0.01 inch (0.25 mm).

**1012.3.2 Type II.** *Handrails* with a perimeter greater than 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (160 mm) shall provide a graspable finger recess area on both sides of the profile. The finger recess shall begin within a distance of <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch (19 mm) measured vertically from the tallest portion of the profile and achieve a depth of at least <sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inch (8 mm) within <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inch (22 mm) below the widest portion of the profile. This required depth shall continue for at least <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inch (10 mm) to a level that is not less than 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (45 mm) below the tallest portion of the profile. The minimum width of the *handrail* above the recess shall be 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (32 mm) to a maximum of 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (70 mm). Edges shall have a minimum radius of 0.01 inch (0.25 mm).

**1012.4 Continuity.** *Handrail* gripping surfaces shall be continuous, without interruption by newel posts or other obstructions.

**1012.5 Fittings.** *Handrails* shall not rotate within their fittings.

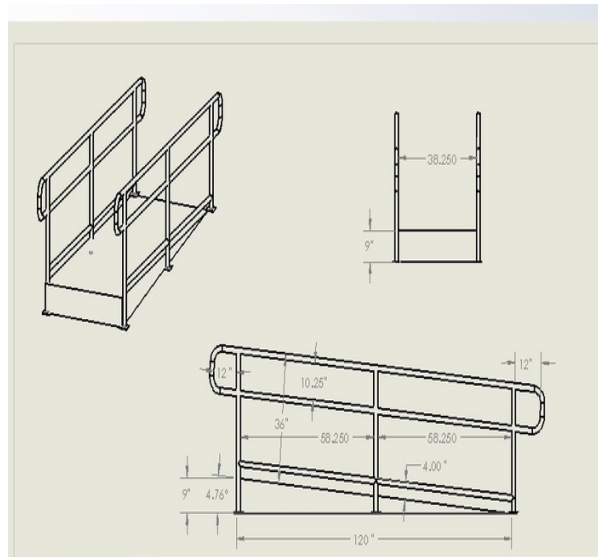
**1012.6 Handrail extensions.** *Handrails* shall return to a wall, *guard* or the walking surface or shall be continuous to the *handrail* of an adjacent *stair flight* or ramp run. Where *handrails* are not continuous between *flights*, the *handrails* shall extend horizontally at least 12 inches (305 mm) beyond the top riser and continue to slope for the depth of one tread beyond the bottom riser. At *ramps* where *handrails* are not continuous between runs, the *handrails* shall extend horizontally above the landing 12 inches (305 mm) minimum beyond the top and bottom of *ramp* runs. The extensions of *handrails* shall be in the same direction of the *stair flights* at *stairways* and the *ramp* runs at *ramps*.

**1012.7 Clearance.** Clear space between a *handrail* and a wall or other surface shall be a minimum of 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches (38 mm). A *handrail* and a wall or other surface adjacent to the *handrail* shall be free of any sharp or abrasive elements.

**1012.8 Projections.** On ramps, the clear width between *handrails* shall be 36 inches (914 mm) minimum. Projections into the required width of *stairways* and *ramps* at each *handrail* shall not exceed 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches (114 mm) at or below the *handrail* height. Projections into the required width shall not be limited above the minimum headroom height required in [Section 1009.2](#).

**1012.9 Intermediate handrails.** *Stairways* shall have intermediate *handrails* located in such a manner that all portions of the *stairway* width required for egress capacity are within 30 inches (762 mm) of a *handrail*. On monumental *stairs*, *handrails* shall be located along the most direct path of egress travel.

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**1013.1 Where required.** *Guards* shall be located along open-sided walking surfaces, including *mezzanines, equipment platforms, stairs, ramps* and landings that are located more than 30 inches (762 mm) measured vertically to the floor or grade below at any point within 36 inches (914 mm) horizontally to the edge of the open side.

**1013.2 Height.** Required *guards* shall be not less than 42 inches (1067 mm) high, measured vertically above the adjacent walking surfaces, adjacent fixed seating or the line connecting the leading edges of the treads.

**1013.3 Opening limitations.** Required *guards* shall not have openings which allow passage of a sphere 4 inches (102 mm) in diameter from the walking surface to the required *guard* height.

## Exceptions:

1. From a height of 36 inches (914 mm) to 42 inches (1067 mm), *guards* shall not have openings which allow passage of a sphere  $4\frac{3}{8}$  inches (111 mm) in diameter.
2. The triangular openings at the open sides of a *stair*, formed by the riser, tread and bottom rail shall not allow passage of a sphere 6 inches (152 mm) in diameter.
3. At elevated walking surfaces for access to and use of electrical, mechanical or plumbing systems or equipment, *guards* shall not have openings which allow passage of a sphere 21 inches (533 mm) in diameter.
4. In areas that are not open to the public within occupancies in Group I-3, F, H or S, and for *alternating tread devices* and ship ladders, *guards* shall not have openings which allow passage of a sphere 21 inches (533 mm) in diameter.

**1013.5 Mechanical equipment.** *Guards* shall be provided where appliances, equipment, fans, roof hatch openings or other components that require service are located within 10 feet (3048 mm) of a roof edge or open side of a walking surface and such edge or open side is located more than 30 inches (762 mm) above the floor, roof or grade below. The *guard* shall be constructed so as to prevent the passage of a sphere 21 inches (533 mm) in diameter. The *guard* shall extend not less than 30 inches (762 mm) beyond each end of such appliance, equipment, fan or component.

**1013.6 Roof access.** *Guards* shall be provided where the roof hatch opening is located within 10 feet (3048 mm) of a roof edge or open side of a walking surface and such edge or open side is located more than 30 inches (762 mm) above the floor, roof or grade below. The *guard* shall be constructed so as to prevent the passage of a sphere 21 inches (533 mm) in diameter.

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