

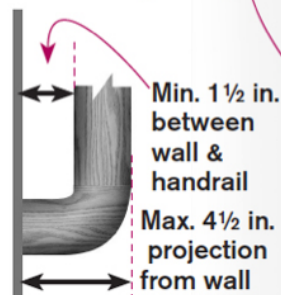


Residential Code Check Illustrations 2020 Stairs and Guards

Code Check

Stair Width & Height

34–38 in. from top of handrail to line connecting nosings



Min.
36 in.

Min.
6 ft. 8 in.
headroom
clearance

Light switch
req. at each
floor level
with 6 or
more
risers.

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General Stairway

- R311.7.1 Width. Stairways shall be not less than 36 inches (914 mm) in clear width at all points above the permitted handrail height and below the required headroom height.

- R311.7.2 Headroom. The headroom in stairways shall be not less than 6 feet 8 inches (2032 mm) measured vertically from the sloped line adjoining the tread nosing or from the floor surface of the landing or platform on that portion of the stairway.
- R311.7.3 Vertical rise. A flight of stairs shall not have a vertical rise larger than 151 inches (3835 mm) between floor levels or landings.
- R311.7.8 Handrails. Handrails shall be provided on not less than one side of each flight of stairs with four or more risers.

Inspection Services Department

240 Pine Ave Ste 300
Albany, GA 31702
Monday through Friday
8:00am to 4:30pm
inspections@albanyga.gov
Inspection Phone 229-302-1855

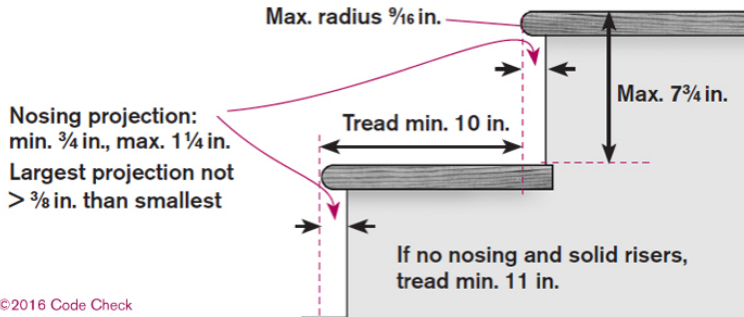
The information contained within this bulletin is the most common needed to obtain a permit and is not representative of all the conditions that may be encountered during the construction of your project.

- R311.7.8.1 Height. Handrail height, measured vertically from the sloped plane adjoining the tread nosing, or finish surface of ramp slope, shall be not less than 34 inches (864 mm) and not more than 38 inches (965 mm).
- R311.7.8.2 Handrail projection. Handrails shall not project more than 4 1/2 inches (114 mm) on either side of the stairway.
- R311.7.8.3 Handrail clearance. Handrails adjacent to a wall shall have a space of not less than 1 1/2 inches (38 mm) between the wall and the handrails.
- R311.7.8.4 Continuity. Handrails shall be continuous for the full length of the flight, from a point directly above the top riser of the flight to a point directly above the lowest riser of the flight. Handrail ends shall be returned or shall terminate in newel posts or safety terminals.
- R311.7.9 Illumination. Stairways shall be provided with illumination in accordance with Sections R303.7 and R303.8.

Stair Rise and Run

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Stair Rise & Run



- R311.7.5 Stair treads and risers. Stair treads and risers shall meet the requirements of this section. For the purposes of this section, dimensions and dimensioned surfaces shall be exclusive of carpets, rugs or runners.

- R311.7.5.1 Risers. The riser height shall be not more than $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches (196 mm). The riser shall be measured vertically between leading edges of the adjacent treads.
- R311.7.5.2 Treads. The tread depth shall be not less than 10 inches (254 mm). The tread depth shall be measured horizontally between the vertical planes of the foremost projection of adjacent treads and at a right angle to the tread's leading edge. The greatest tread depth within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (9.5 mm).

The riser height, tread depth and profile requirements for stairways are specified in Sections R311.7.5.1 through R311.7.5.3. These provisions facilitate smooth and consistent travel. This section provides dimensional ranges and tolerances for the component elements to allow the flexibility required to design and construct a stair or a flight of stairs, which are elements of a stairway. The allowed proportion of maximum riser height and minimum tread depth provides for a maximum angle of ascent, but there is no maximum tread depth or minimum riser height that would define a minimum angle for a stairway. Nor is the proportion of riser height to tread depth compared with the limitations of the length of the user's stride on stairways, which is significantly foreshortened from the user's stride on the level.

- R311.7.5.3 Nosings. Nosings at treads, landings and floors of stairways shall have a radius of curvature at the nosing not greater than $\frac{9}{16}$ inch (14 mm) or a bevel not greater than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (12.7 mm). A nosing projection not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (19 mm) and not more than $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches (32 mm) shall be provided on stairways. The greatest nosing projection shall not exceed the smallest nosing projection by more than $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (9.5 mm) within a stairway.

The sectional parameters of the components of a step or stair contribute to stairway safety. The radius or bevel of the nosing eases the otherwise square edge of the tread and prevents irregular chipping that can become a maintenance issue seriously affecting the safe use of the stair, and eliminates a sharp square edge that will cause greater injury in falls. A radius or bevel allows light modeling, reflecting light at various angles, providing a certain contrast from the other surfaces of the stair, allowing easier visual location of the start of the tread surface.

Winding Stairs

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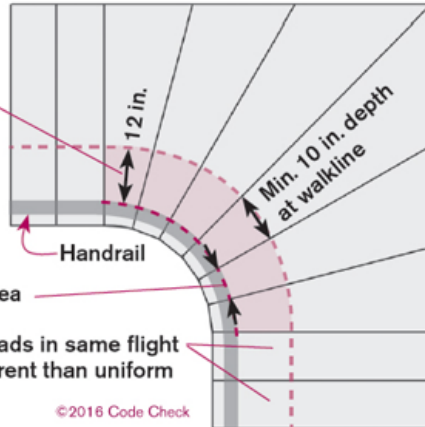
Winding Stairs

Walkline is concentric to direction of travel & measured 12 in. from point where foot can be placed on narrow side of stairs.

Min. 10 in. tread depth at walkline; deepest tread may not exceed shortest by $> \frac{3}{8}$ in.

Min. 6 in. depth within shaded area

Uniform depth of rectangular treads in same flight as winders is allowed to be different than uniform depth of winders at walkline.



R311.7.5.2.1 Winder treads. Winder treads shall have a tread depth of not less than 10 inches (254 mm) measured between the vertical planes of the foremost projection of adjacent treads at the intersections with the walkline.

Winder treads shall have a tread depth of not less than 6 inches (152 mm) at any point within the clear width of the stair. Within any flight of stairs, the largest winder tread depth at the walkline shall not exceed the smallest winder tread by more than $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (9.5 mm).

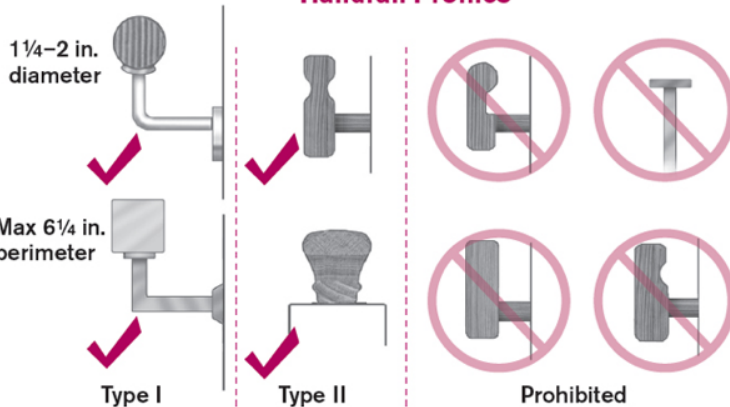
Consistently shaped winders at the walkline shall be allowed within the same flight of stairs as rectangular treads and shall not be required to be within $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (9.5 mm) of the rectangular tread depth.

R311.7.8.5 Grip size. Required handrails shall be of one of the following types or provide equivalent graspability.

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Handrail Profiles

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Type II handrails must have graspable finger recess on both sides

R311.7.8.5 Grip size. Required handrails shall be of one of the following types or provide equivalent graspability.

Type I. Handrails with a circular cross section shall have an outside diameter of not less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches (32 mm) and not greater than 2 inches (51 mm). If the handrail is not circular, it shall have a perimeter of not less than 4 inches (102 mm) and not greater than $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches (160 mm) and a cross section of not more than $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches (57 mm). Edges shall have a radius of not less than 0.01 inch (0.25 mm).

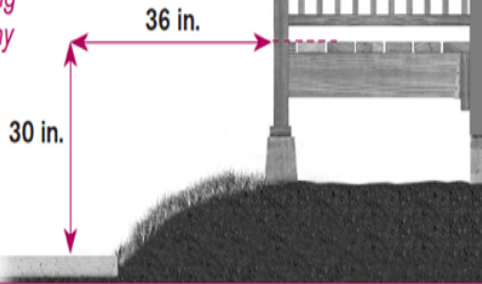
Type II. Handrails with a perimeter greater than $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches (160 mm) shall have a graspable finger recess area on both sides of the profile. The finger recess shall begin within $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (19 mm) measured vertically from the tallest portion of the profile and have a depth of not less than $\frac{5}{16}$ inch (8 mm) within $\frac{7}{8}$ inch (22 mm) below the widest portion of the profile. This required depth shall continue for not less than $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (10 mm) to a level that is not less than $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches (45 mm) below the tallest portion of the profile. The width of the handrail above the recess shall be not less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches (32 mm) and not more than $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches (70 mm). Edges shall have a radius of not less than 0.01 inch (0.25 mm).

Guards and Handrails

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Guards

Guard req'd when walking surface >30 in. above any point within 36 in.



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R312.1.1 Where required. Guards shall be provided for those portions of open-sided walking surfaces, including 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. Insect screening shall not be considered as a guard.

This section establishes stairs, ramps and landings as examples of open-sided walking surfaces, but this is not an all-inclusive list of locations where guards are required. A guard is required to minimize falls if the elevation exceeds the 30-inch (762 mm) height at any point within 36 inches (914 mm) horizontally of the edge of the walking surface in consideration of such conditions as a sloping site or sudden drop. The scoping requirement for guards along open sides of stairs only applies to that portion of the stairway that is more than 30 inches (762 mm) above the determined point on the grade or floor below.

Georgia 2020 IRC Amendments SECTION R312 GUARDS (Effective January 1, 2020)

Delete Section R312.2 'Window fall protection' without substitution.
(Effective January 1, 2020)

Guards must be constructed so that they prohibit smaller occupants, such as children, from falling through them. To prohibit people from slipping through a guard, any required guard would need to have supports, spindles, intermediate rails or some type of ornamental pattern so that a 4-inch (102 mm) sphere cannot pass through it. This spacing was chosen based on the head size and the chest depth of a child who had not yet developed an ability to crawl. The code does allow two exceptions for this spacing requirement. A 43/8-inch (111 mm) sphere rule is used for the guard on the open side of stair treads. This minor difference of just 3/8 inch (9.5 mm) allows the use of just two balusters at each tread greatly reducing costs with no limitation of safety. A 6-inch (152 mm) sphere rule is used for the triangular area formed by the riser, tread and bottom rail of a guard along the open side of a stair because the triangular shape is more restrictive (see Commentary Figure R312.1.3).

Code Check

Handrail & Guard Openings

OK for top of rail to be > 38 in. at volute or transition

43/8 in. max

34-38 in. to top of handrail

4 in. max

Guard req'd when walking surface ≥ 30 in. above floor or grade within 36 in. horizontally

Min 36 in.

Min 36 in.

6 in. diameter OK in triangular space formed by riser, tread & bottom of rail

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R312.1.2 Height. Required guards at open-sided walking surfaces, including stairs, porches, balconies or landings, shall be not less than 36 inches (914 mm) in height as measured vertically above the adjacent walking surface or the line connecting the nosings.

R312.1.3 Opening limitations. Required guards shall not have openings from the walking surface to the required guard height that allow passage of a sphere 4 inches (102 mm) in diameter.