



## RESIDENTIAL STAIRWAY, HANDRAIL, AND GUARDRAIL MINIMUM CODE REQUIREMENTS

CITY OF ALAMEDA - PERMIT CENTER  
2263 SANTA CLARA AVENUE, ROOM 190  
ALAMEDA CA 94501  
510-747-6800 ph 510-747-6804 fax

**Exterior Stairway:** Must have first step of concrete or pressure-treated lumber

**Stairway width:** 36" minimum

**Headroom:** 80" minimum measured vertically from a line connecting the edge of the nosings

**Stair treads and risers:** Stair riser heights shall be 7.75 inches maximum and 4 inches minimum. Stair tread depths shall be 10 inches minimum. A nosing not less than 0.75 inch but not more than 1.25 inches shall be provided on stairways with solid risers where the tread depth is less than 11 inches.

**Stairway landings:** Stairways must have a landing, top and bottom, equal to the width of stairs. The minimum dimension measured in the direction of travel shall equal to the width of the stairway, but need not exceed 48" where the stairway has a straight run. Doors opening onto a landing shall not reduce the landing to less than one-half the required width. When fully open, the door shall not project more than 7" into a landing.

**Handrails:** Handrails must be 34" – 38" above run, commencing at first riser to last and must return to wall or end in a newel post. Handrails with a circular cross-section shall have an outside diameter between 1.25" and 2" or shall provide equivalent graspability. If the handrail is not circular, it shall have a perimeter dimension between 4" and 6.25," with a maximum cross-section dimension of 2.25." Edges shall have a minimum radius of 0.01."

**Guards:** Guards shall be located along open-sided walking surfaces, stairways, ramps and landings that are located more than 30" above the floor or grade below. Guards shall form a protective barrier not less than 42" high, except when top rail also serves as a handrail, guard height shall not be less than 34."

**Enclosures under stairways:** The walls and soffits under enclosed stairways shall be protected on the enclosed side with 0.5" gypsum board. There shall be no enclosed usable space under exterior exit stairways unless the space is completely enclosed in one-hour fire-resistance construction. The space under exterior stairways shall not be used for any purpose.

