

## **SECTION 315 HANDRAILS AND GUARDRAILS**

**315.1 HANDRAILS.** Handrails having minimum and maximum heights of 30 inches and 38 inches (762 mm and 965 mm), respectively, measured vertically from the nosing of the treads, shall be provided on at least one side of the stairways of three or more risers. Spiral stairways shall have the required handrail located on the outside radius. All required handrails shall be continuous the full length of the stairs. Ends shall be returned or shall terminate in newel post or safety terminals. Handrails adjacent to a wall shall have a space of not less than 1 1/2 inches (38 mm) between the wall and the handrail.

**Exceptions:**

1. Handrails shall be permitted to be interrupted by a newel post at a turn.
2. The use of a volute, turnout or starting easing shall be allowed over the lowest tread.

**315.2 Handrail grip size.** Handrails shall have either a circular cross section with a diameter of 1 1/4 inches (32 mm) to 2 inches (51mm), or a noncircular cross section with a perimeter dimension of at least 4 inches (102 mm) but not more than 6 1/4 inches (159 mm) and a largest cross-section dimension not exceeding 2 1/4 inches (28.6 mm). Edges shall have a minimum radius of 1/8 inch (3.2 mm).

**315.3 Guardrail details.** Porches, balconies or raised floor surfaces located more than 30 inches (762 mm) above the floor or grade below shall have guardrails not less than 36 inches (914 mm) in height. Open sides of stairs with a total rise of more than 30 inches (762mm) above the floor or grade below shall have guardrails not less than 34 inches (864 mm) in height measured vertically from the nosing of the treads.

**315.4 Guardrail opening limitations.** Required guardrails on open sides of stairways, raised floor areas, balconies and porches shall have intermediate rails or ornamental closures which do not allow passage of an object 4 inches (102 mm) or more in diameter.

**Exception:** The triangular openings formed by the riser, tread and bottom rail of a guard at the open side of a stairway may be of such a size that a sphere 6 inches (153 mm) cannot pass through.