



## **Residential Stairs & Handrails**

**Bulletin #3**

For 2018 International Codes

Answers to commonly asked questions about the construction and placement of landings, stairs and railings for site built and manufactured homes.

### **Do zoning yard setbacks apply to landings, stairs, and handrails?**

Any structure more than 30 inches above grade must meet setbacks.

### **What type of stair and landing materials are allowed?**

Approved materials for exterior stairs include treated outdoor wood, wood with natural resistance to decay, approved composite materials, and other approved exterior rated materials. Check the manufacturer's listing before using. Non treated wood is acceptable at interior locations only.

Landings may be constructed of concrete, pavers, contained crushed rock, or any other material approved for stair construction.

### **What type of landings are required for my stairs?**

A floor or landing is required at the top and bottom of each stairway. For interior stairways a landing is not required at the top provided a door does not swing over the stairs. The landing depth in the direction of travel shall be not less than 36 inches

The walking surface of treads and landings of stairways shall be sloped not steeper than one unit vertical in 48 inches horizontal (2-percent slope).

### **Do I need a guard (railing) or handrail for stairs and landings?**

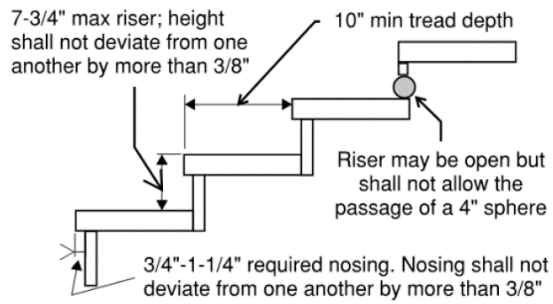
You will need a code complaint guard (railing) around your landing or stairs if the walking surface is 30 inches or more above grade measured out 3' from the deck. A handrail is required on at least one side of all stairways with 4 or more risers regardless of height.

Safety glazing (tempered glass) may be required if your stairs are constructed near windows or other glass surfaces, additional information is available in R308.4.

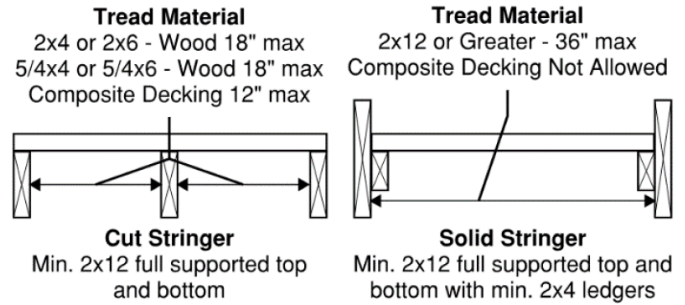
If you have questions about setbacks or building codes, please contact the Development Center at (253) 798-7250.

The details on the following pages are examples of the code requirements based on the 2018 International Residential Code.

## Typical stair construction

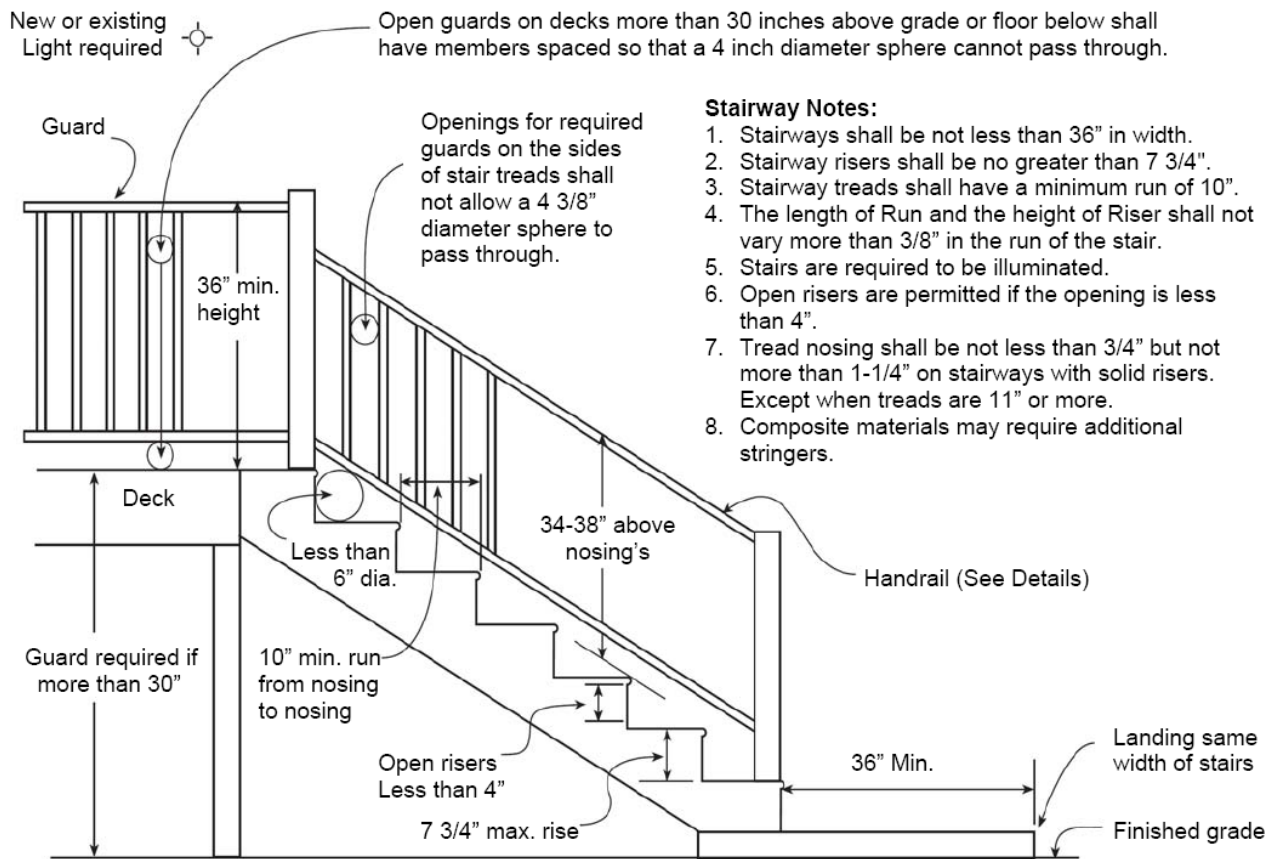


## Stair stringer construction



## Complete stairway, handrail and landings

A flight of stairs shall not have a vertical rise larger than 12 feet 7 inches between floor levels or landings. R311.7.3



### Stairway Notes:

1. Stairways shall be not less than 36" in width.
2. Stairway risers shall be no greater than 7 3/4".
3. Stairway treads shall have a minimum run of 10".
4. The length of Run and the height of Riser shall not vary more than 3/8" in the run of the stair.
5. Stairs are required to be illuminated.
6. Open risers are permitted if the opening is less than 4".
7. Tread nosing shall be not less than 3/4" but not more than 1-1/4" on stairways with solid risers. Except when treads are 11" or more.
8. Composite materials may require additional stringers.

## Stair handrail requirements

All stairs with 4 or more risers shall have a handrail on at least one side. Handrails shall run continuously from directly over the top riser to directly over the lowest riser and shall return to the guard or wall at each end. Handrails may be interrupted by guard posts at a turn in the stair [R311.7.8.4].

Handrails shall be graspable and shall be Type I, Type II, or provide equivalent graspability.

