

**UPFRO ASSOCIATES, INC.**

**NFPA 101 LIFE SAFETY CODE  
2000 Edition**

*The following data is taken in part.*

| 7.2.2 - Stairs  | New Stairs 7.2.2.2.1(a)   | Existing Stairs 7.2.2.2.1(b) |           |
|---|---|------------------------------|-----------|
|   |   | Class A                      | Class B   |
| Min. width clear of all obstructions, except projections not more than 3.5 inches at or below handrail height on each side. | 44 inches; 36 inches where total occupant load of all stores served by stairways is fewer than 50 | 44 inches                    | 44 inches |
| Maximum height of risers  | 7 inches  | 7.5"                         | 8"        |
| Minimum height of risers  | 4 inches  | -                            | -         |
| Minimum tread depth   | 11 inches   | 10"                          | 9"        |
| Minimum head room   | 6 feet 8 inches (80 inches)   | 6'8"                         | 6'8"      |
| Maximum height between landings   | 12 feet   | 12'                          | 12'       |

**7.2.2.3.2 Landings**

Stairs shall have landings at door openings. Stairs and intermediate landings shall continue with no decrease in width along the direction of egress travel. In new buildings, every landing shall have a dimension measured in the direction of travel that is not less than the width of the stair.

Exception No. 1

Landings shall not be required to exceed 4 ft in the direction of travel, provided the stair has a straight run.

Exception No. 2:

In one- and two-family dwellings and existing buildings, a door at the top of the stair shall be permitted to open directly at a stair, provided that the door does not swing over the stair and the door serves as an area with an occupant load of fewer than 50 persons.

**7.2.2.4 Guards and Handrails**

**7.2.2.4.1\* Guards.**

Means of egress that are more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below shall be provided with guards to prevent falls over the open side.

**7.2.2.4\* Handrails**

Stairs and ramps shall have handrails on both sides. In addition, handrails shall be provided within 30 inches of all portions of the required egress width of stairs. The required egress width shall be provided along the natural path of travel.

Exception No 1:

On existing stairs, handrails shall be provided within 44 inches....

Exception No. 2:

If a single step or a ramp is part of a curb that separates a sidewalk from a vehicular way, it shall not be required to have a handrail.

Exception No 3:

Existing stairs...within dwelling units...shall be permitted to have a handrail on one side only.

**7.2.2.4.5\* Handrail Details**

(1) Handrails on stairs shall not be less than 34 inches and not more than 38 inches above the surface of the tread measured vertically to the top of the rail from the leading edge of the tread.

(4) New handrails shall be continuously graspable along their entire length.

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**Interpretive Statements – simplified.**

1. **Four or more steps require a handrail.**
2. **Three steps and a landing + three steps and a landing, etc. negate requiring a handrail.**

Samples



NFPA Stairs & Handrails updated on: 1/16/2007 11:04:00 AM