



## CODE INFORMATION SHEET

Based on the 2015 edition of the Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code, NFPA 101 NFPA 1 and Other Codes and Standards

# Requirements for HANDRAILS

Handrails are a critical component of stair safety. Handrails play a significant role in providing help for people with mobility issues. They're also sometimes used as statement pieces, but they're mainly used to help people get between floors safely, as they offer better balance and prevent falls from occurring.

Stairs and ramps shall have handrails on both sides, unless otherwise permitted.

Handrails shall be required at one side only for the following components:

- (1) Existing stairs
- (2) Existing ramps
- (3) New and existing stairs within dwelling units and within guest rooms
- (4) New and existing ramps within dwelling units and within guest rooms

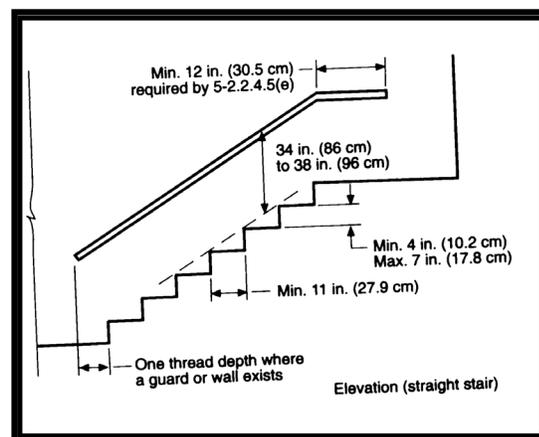
### Handrail Details.

New handrails on stairs shall be not less than **34 in.** and not more than **38 in.** above the surface of the tread, measured vertically to the top of the rail from the leading edge of the tread.

**Existing required handrails** shall be not less than **30 in.** and not more than **38 in.** above the surface of the tread, measured vertically to the top of the rail from the leading edge of the tread.

The height of required handrails that form part of a guard shall be permitted to exceed **38 in.**, but shall not exceed **42 in.**, measured vertically to the top of the rail from the leading edge of the tread.

Additional handrails that are lower or higher than the main handrail shall be permitted.

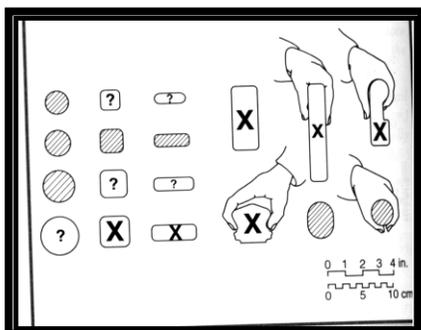


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Required guards and handrails shall continue for the full length of each flight of stairs. At turns of new stairs, inside handrails shall be continuous between flights at landings.

New handrail ends shall be returned to the wall or floor or shall terminate at newel posts.

### Handrails shall include one of the following features:



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(1) A circular cross section with an outside diameter of not less than  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. and not more than 2 in.

(2) A shape that is other than circular with a perimeter dimension of not less than 4 in., but not more than  $6\frac{1}{4}$  in., and with the largest cross-sectional dimension not more than  $2\frac{1}{4}$  in. provided that graspable edges are rounded.

Handrail brackets or balusters attached to the bottom surface of the handrail shall not be considered to be obstructions to graspability.