

HANDRAILS – Section R311.5.6 2003 IRC

311.5.6 Handrails. Handrails shall be provided on at least one side of each continuous run of treads or flight with four or more risers.

R311.5.6.1 Height. Handrail height, measured vertically from the sloped plane adjoining the tread nosing, or finish surface of ramp slope, shall be not less than 34 inches (864 mm) and not more than 38 inches (965 mm).

R311.5.6.2 Continuity. Handrails for stairways shall be continuous for the full length of the flight, from a point directly above the top riser of the flight to a point directly above lowest riser of the flight. Handrail ends shall be returned or shall terminate in newel posts or safety terminals. Handrails adjacent to a wall shall have a space not less than 1-1/2 inch (38 mm) between the wall and the handrails.

Exceptions:

1. Handrails shall be permitted to be interrupted by a newel post at the turn. A change in direction for a winder stair is not considered as a turn.
2. The use of a volute, turnout, starting easing or starting newel shall be allowed over the lowest tread.

R311.5.6.3 Handrail grip size. All required handrails shall be of one of the following types or provide equivalent grasp ability.

1. **Item 1**, (Local Amendment) Handrails with a circular cross section shall have an outside diameter of at least 1.25 inches (32 mm) and not greater than 2 inches (51 mm) or shall provide equivalent graspability. If a handrail is not circular, it shall have a maximum horizontal cross section dimension of at least 1.25 inches (32 mm) and not greater than 3 inches (57 mm). The narrowest horizontal cross section of the handgrip portion of the handrail shall have a minimum dimension 0.75 inch (20 mm) less than the maximum horizontal cross section. The surface of the handgrip portion of the handrail shall have a perimeter dimension of at least 4 inches (102 mm) and not greater than 6.25 inches (160 mm) measured to the centerline of the narrowest horizontal cross section. Edges shall have a minimum radius of 0.01 inch (0.25 mm).
2. **Item 2**, deleted.