

# Single Family Stairways

Properly installed stairways and handrails are an important feature to your home that provides support to prevent falls and creates a safe entrance and access to other levels in the home.

## Dimensional tolerances

The largest tread depth or riser height within any stairway must not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8 inch.

## Headroom

Every stairway must have a headroom clearance of not less than 6 ft. 8 in. The clearance must be measured vertically from the sloped plan adjoining the tread nosing or from the floor surface of the landings.

## Width

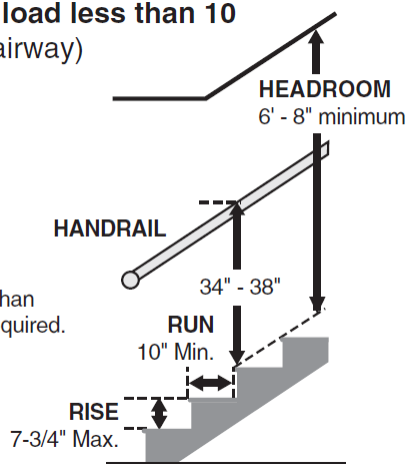
Stairways must not be less than 36 inches wide. The handrail may enter a maximum of 4 1/2 inches into this dimension. If placing two handrails on a stairway, maintain a minimum of 27 inches.

## Illumination

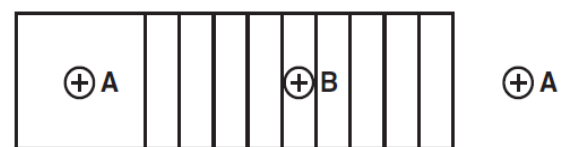
All interior and exterior stairways must be illuminated at a minimum one foot candle.

### Occupant load less than 10 (Private stairway)

If stairway has closed risers and stair tread is less than 11 inches, a nosing of 3/4 inch depth by no greater than 1-1/4 inch is required.



### Stairway lighting



**Interior lighting** must be installed either over the stair (Points B) or over the landings (Points A).

**Exterior** stairs must be lit at a minimum by the landing at the top of the stairway. The light control must be provided within the dwelling unit or automatically controlled, e.g. motion detector light.

## Risers

Open risers are permitted, provided that the opening between treads does not exceed 4 inches. This does not apply if less than 30

inches above floor or grade.

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## Handrails

Handrails are required at four or more risers. The top must be placed not less than 34 inches, or more than 38 inches above, the nosing of the treads. The ends must be returned or terminated in newel posts or safety terminals.

All required handrails must be continuous for the full length of the stairs from a point directly above the top riser of the flight to a point directly above the lowest riser of the flight.

Exceptions to the above requirements are:

- Handrails may be interrupted by a newel post at a turn.
- A volute, turnout or starting easing is allowed over the lowest tread.

The handgrips must not be less than 1 ¼ inches or more than 2 inches in cross-sectional dimension or the shape must provide an equivalent gripping surface. The handgrip must have a smooth surface with ends returned.

## Guard opening limitations

