

Section 1009
STAIRWAYS

1009.1 Stairway width. The width of stairways shall be determined as specified Section 1005.1, but such width shall not be less than 44 inches (1118 mm). See Section 1007.3 for accessible means of egress stairways.

Exceptions:

1. Stairways serving an occupant load of less than 50 shall be a width of not less than 36 inches (914 mm).
2. Spiral stairways as provided for in Section 1009.8.
3. Aisle stairs complying with Section 1025.
4. Where an incline platform lift or stairway chairlift is installed on stairways serving occupancies in Group R-3, or within dwelling units in occupancies in Group R-2, a clear passage width not less than 20 inches (508 mm) shall be provided. If the seat and platform can be folded when not in use, the distance shall be measured from the folded position.

1009.2 Headroom. Stairways shall have a minimum headroom clearance of 80 inches (2032 mm) measured vertically from a line connecting the edge of the nosings. Such headroom shall be continuous above the stairway to the point where the line intersects the landing below, one tread depth beyond the bottom riser. The minimum clearance shall be maintained the full width of the stairway and landing.

Exception:

Spiral stairways complying with Section 1009.8 are permitted a 78- inch (1981 mm) headroom clearance.

1009.3 Stair treads and risers. Stair riser heights shall be 7 inches (178 mm) maximum and 4 inches (102 mm) minimum. Stair tread depths shall be 11 inches (279 mm) minimum. The riser height shall be measure vertically between the leading edges of adjacent treads. The tread depth shall be measure horizontally between the vertical planes of the foremost projection of adjacent treads and at a right angle to the tread's leading edge. Winder treads shall have a minimum tread depth of 11 inches (279 mm) measured at a right angle to the tread's leading edge at a point 12 inches (305 mm) from the side where the treads are narrower and a minimum tread depth of 10 inches 254 mm).

Exceptions:

1. Alternating tread devices in accordance with Section 1009.0.
2. Spiral stairways in accordance with Section 1009.8.
3. Aisle stairs in assembly seating areas where the stair pitch or slope is set, for sightline reasons, by the slope of the adjacent seating area in accordance with Section 1025.11.2.
4. In Group R-3 occupancies; within dwelling units in Group R-2 occupancies; and in Group U occupancies that are accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy or accessory to individual dwelling units in Group R-2 occupancies; the maximum riser height shall be 7.75 inches (197 mm); the minimum tread

depth shall be 10 inches (254 mm); the minimum winder tread depth at the walk line shall be 10 inches (254 mm); and the minimum winder tread depth shall be 6 inches (152 mm). A nosing not less than 0.75 inch (19.1 mm) but not more than 1.25 inches (32 mm) shall be provided on stairways with solid risers where the tread depth is less than 11 inches (279 mm).

5. See the Section 3404.4 for the replacement of existing stairways.

1009.3.1 Winder treads. Winder treads are not permitted in means of egress stairways except within a dwelling unit.

Exceptions:

1. Curved stairways in accordance with Section 1009.7.
2. Spiral stairways in accordance with Section 1009.8.

1009.3.2 Dimensional uniformity. Stair treads and risers shall be of uniform size and shape. The tolerance between the largest and smallest riser height or between the largest and smallest tread depth shall not exceed 0.375 inch (9.5 mm) in any flight of stairs. The greatest winder tread depth at the 12 inch (305 mm) walk line within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than 0.375 inch (9.5 mm) measured at a right angle to the tread's leading edge.

Exceptions:

1. Nonuniform riser dimensions of aisle stairs complying with Section 1025.11.2.
2. Consistently shaped winders, complying with Section 1009.3, differing from rectangular treads in the same stairway flight.

Where the bottom or top riser adjoins a sloping public way, walkway or driveway having an established grade and serving as a landing, the bottom or top riser is permitted to be reduced along the slope to less than 4 inches (102 mm) in height, with the variation in height of the bottom or top riser not to exceed one unit vertical in 12 units horizontal (8-percent slope) of stairway width. The nosings or leading edges of treads at such nonuniform height risers shall have a distinctive marking stripe, different from any other nosing marking provided on the stair flight. The distinctive marking stripe shall be visible in descent of the stair and shall have a slip-resistant surface. Marking stripes shall have a width of at least 1 inch (25 mm) but not more than 2 inches (51 mm).

1009.3.3 Profile. The radius of curvature at the leading edge of the tread shall be not greater than 0.5 inch (12.7 mm). Beveling of nosings shall not exceed 0.5 inch (12.7 mm). Risers shall be solid and vertical or sloped from the underside of the leading edge of the tread above at an angle not more than 30 degrees (0.52 rad) from the vertical. The leading edge (nosings) of treads shall project not more than 1.25 inches (32 mm) beyond the tread below and all projections of the leading edges shall be of uniform size, including the leading edge of the floor at the top of a flight.

Exceptions:

1. Solid risers are not required for stairways that are not required to comply with Section 1007.3, provided that the opening between treads does not permit the passage of a sphere with a diameter of 4 inches (102 mm).
2. Solid risers are not required for occupancies in Group I-3.

1009.4 Stairway landings. There shall be a floor or landing at the top and bottom of each stairway. The width of landings shall not be less than the width of stairways they serve. Every landing shall have a minimum dimension measured in the direction of travel equal to the width of the stairway. Such dimension need not exceed 48 inches (1219 mm) where the stairway has a straight run.

Exceptions:

1. Aisle stairs complying with Section 1025.
2. Doors opening onto a landing shall not reduce the landing to less than one-half the required width. When fully open, the door shall not project more than 7 inches (178 mm) into a landing.

1009.5 Stairway construction. All stairways shall be built of materials consistent with the types permitted for the type of construction of the building, except that wood handrails shall be permitted for all types of construction.

1009.5.1 Stairway walking surface. The walking surface of treads and landings of a stairway shall not be sloped steeper than one unit vertical in 48 units horizontal (2-percent slope) in any direction. Stairway treads and landings shall have a solid surface. Finish floor surfaces shall be securely attached.

Exceptions:

1. In Group F, H and S occupancies, other than areas of parking structures accessible to the public, openings in treads and landings shall not be prohibited provided a sphere with a diameter of 1.125 inches (29 mm) cannot pass through the opening.

1009.5.2 Outdoor conditions. Outdoor stairways and outdoor approaches to stairways shall be designed so that water will not accumulate on walking surfaces.

1009.5.3 Enclosures under stairways. The walls and soffits within enclosed usable spaces under enclosed and unenclosed stairways shall be protected by 1-hour fire-resistance-rated construction or the fire-resistance rating of the stairway enclosure, whichever is greater. Access to the enclosed space shall not be directly from within the stair enclosure.

Exceptions:

1. Spaces under stairways serving and contained within a single residential dwelling unit in Group R-2 or R-3 shall be permitted to be protected on the enclosed side with 0.5 inch (12.7 mm) gypsum board.

There shall be no enclosed usable space under exterior exit stairways unless the space is completely enclosed in 1-hour fire-resistance-rated construction. The open space under exterior stairways shall not be used for any purpose.

1009.6 Vertical rise. A flight of stairs shall not have a vertical rise greater than 12 feet (3658 mm) between floor levels or landings.

Exceptions:

1. Aisle stairs complying with Section 1025.

1009.7 Curved stairways. Curved stairways with winder treads shall have treads and risers in accordance with Section 1009.3 and the smallest radius shall not be less than twice the required width of the stairway.

Exceptions:

1. The radius restriction shall not apply to curved stairways for occupancies in Group R-3 and within individual dwelling units in occupancies in Group R-2.

1009.8 Spiral stairways. Spiral stairways are permitted to be used as a component in the means of egress only within dwelling units or from a space not more than 250 square feet in area and serving not more than five occupants, or from galleries, catwalks and gridirons in accordance with Section 1015.6.

A spiral stairway shall have a 7.5 inch (191 mm) minimum clear tread depth at a point 12 inches (305 mm) from the narrow edge. The risers shall be sufficient to provide a headroom of 78 inches (1981 mm) minimum, but riser height shall not be more than 9.5 inches (241 mm). The minimum stairway width shall be 26 inches (660 mm).

1009.9 Alternating tread devices. Alternating tread devices are limited to an element of a means of egress in buildings of Groups F, H and S from a mezzanine not more than 250 square feet in area and which serves not more than five occupants; in buildings of Group I-3 from a guard tower, observation station or control room not more than 250 square feet in area and for access to unoccupied roofs.

1009.9.1 Handrails of alternating tread devices. Handrails shall be provided on both sides of alternating tread devices and shall comply with Section 1012.

1009.9.2 Treads of alternating tread devices. Alternating tread devices shall have a minimum projected tread of 5 inches (127 mm), a minimum tread depth of 8.5 inches (216 mm), a minimum tread width of 7 inches (178 mm) and a maximum riser height of 9.5 inches (241 mm). The initial tread of the device shall begin at the same elevation as the platform, landing or floor surface.

Exceptions:

1. Alternating tread devices used as an element of a means of egress in buildings from a mezzanine area not more than 250 square feet in area which serves not more than five occupants shall have a minimum projected tread of 8.5 inches

(216 mm) with a minimum tread depth of 10.5 inches (267 mm). The rise to the next alternating tread surface should not be more than 8 inches (203 mm).

1009.10 Handrails. Stairways shall have handrails on each side and shall comply with Section 1012. Where glass is used to provide the handrail, the handrail shall also comply with Section 2407.

Exceptions:

1. Aisle stairs complying with Section 1025 provided with a center handrail need not have additional handrails.
2. Stairways within dwelling units, spiral stairways and aisle stairs serving seating only on one side are permitted to have a handrail on one side only.
3. Decks, patios and walkways that have a single change in elevation where the landing depth on each side of the change of elevation is greater than what is required for a landing do not require handrails.
4. In Group R-3 occupancies, a change in elevation consisting of a single riser at an entrance or egress door does not require handrails.
5. Changes in room elevations of only one riser within dwelling units and sleeping units in Group R-2 and R-3 occupancies do not require handrails.

1009.11 Stairway to roof. In buildings located four or more stories in height above grade plane, one stairway shall extend to the roof surface, unless the roof has a slope steeper than four units vertical in 12 units horizontal (33-percent slope). In buildings without an occupied roof, access to the roof from the top story shall be permitted to be by an alternating tread device.

1009.11.1 Roof access. Where a stairway is provided to a roof, access to the roof shall be provided through a penthouse complying with Section 1509.2.

Exceptions:

1. In buildings without an occupied roof, access to the roof shall be permitted to be a roof hatch or trap door not less than 16 square feet in area and having a minimum dimension of 2 feet (610 mm).

1009.11.2 Protection at roof hatch openings. Where the roof hatch opening providing the required access is located within 10 feet (3049 mm) of the roof edge, such roof access or roof edge shall be protected by guards installed in accordance with the provisions of Section 1013.