

Section 1012  
**HANDRAILS**

- 1012.1 Where required.** Handrails for stairways and ramps shall be adequate in strength and attachment in accordance with Section 1607.7. Handrails required for stairways by Section 1009.10 shall comply with Sections 1012.2 through 1012.8. Handrails required for ramps by Section 1010.8 shall comply with Sections 1012.2 through 1012.7.
- 1012.2 Height.** Handrail height, measured above stair tread nosings, or finish surface of ramp slope shall be uniform, not less than 34 inches (864 mm) and not more than 38 inches (965 mm).
- 1012.3 Handrail graspability.** 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 the handrail is not circular, it shall have a perimeter dimension of at least 4 inches (102 mm) and not greater than 6.25 inches (160 mm) with a maximum cross-section dimension of 2.25 inches (57 mm). Edges shall have a minimum radius of 0.01 inch (0.25 mm).
- 1012.4 Continuity.** Handrail-gripping surfaces shall be continuous, without interruption by newel posts or other obstructions.

**Exceptions:**

1. Handrails within dwelling units are permitted to be interrupted by a new posts at a stair landing.
2. Within a dwelling unit, the use of a volute, turnout or starting easing is allowed on the lowest tread.
3. Handrail brackets or balusters attached to the bottom surface of the handrail that do not project horizontally beyond the sides of the handrail within 1.5 inches (38 mm) of the bottom of the handrail shall be considered obstructions. For each 0.5 inch (12.7 mm) of additional handrail perimeter dimension above 4 inches (102 mm), the vertical clearance dimension of 1.5 inches (38 mm) shall be permitted to be reduced by 0.125 inch (3mm).

- 1012.5 Handrail extensions.** Handrails shall return to a wall, guard or the walking surface or shall be continuous to the handrail of an adjacent stair flight or ramp run. At stairways where handrails are not continuous between flights, the handrails shall extend horizontally at least 12 inches (305 mm) beyond the top riser and continue to slope for the depth of one tread beyond the bottom riser. At ramps where handrails are not continuous between runs, the handrail shall extend horizontally above the landing 12 inches (305 mm) minimum beyond the top and bottom ramps.

**Exceptions:**

1. Handrails within a dwelling unit that is not required to be accessible need extend only from the top riser to the bottom riser.

2. Aisle handrails in Group A occupancies in accordance with Section 1025.13.

**1012.6 Clearance.** Clear space between a handrail and a wall or other surface shall be a minimum of 1.5 inches (38 mm). A handrail and a wall or other surface adjacent to the handrail shall be free of any sharp or abrasive elements.

**1012.7 Projections.** On ramps, the clear width between handrails shall be 36 inches (914 mm) minimum. Projections into the required width of stairways and ramps at each handrail shall not exceed 4.5 inches (114 mm) at or below the handrail height. Projections into the required width shall not be limited above the minimum headroom height required in Section 1009.2.

**1012.8 Intermediate handrails.** Stairways shall have intermediate handrails located in such a manner so that all portions of the stairway width required for egress capacity are within 30 inches (762 mm) of a handrail. On monumental stairs, handrails shall be located along the most direct path of egress travel.