



STAIRS - HOUSE

ONTARIO BUILDING CODE

The Ontario Building Code requires that all stairs meet specific requirements related to the rise, run, and width. This guide does not address spiral stairs or tapered treads. Additional OBC requirements apply to these configurations.

Steps

Steps are required to be constructed with equal rise and run throughout each flight of stairs measured from the ground at the bottom of the stairs to the top of an intermediate landing or the top of the walking surface. The top step and bottom step are usually the most problematic due to grading changes.

Stairs are required to be a minimum 34 inches wide. A flight of stairs must be provided with a landing if the change in height exceeds 12 feet 1 inch.

Each step within a flight of stairs may have up to 1 inch of nosing, but must be uniform throughout.

The table below lists the minimum and maximum dimensions.

Stair Type	All Steps		Rectangular Treads	
	Rise (inches)		Run (inches)	
	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
Private*	4 ¹⁵ / ₁₆ "	7 ⁷ / ₈ "	10 ¹ / ₁₆ "	14"
Public**	4 ¹⁵ / ₁₆ "	7 ⁷ / ₈ "	11"	No Limit
* Private Stairs – interior stairs within and exterior stairs serving a house or individual dwelling unit, and exterior stairs serving a garage that serves a house or single dwelling unit				
** Public Stairs – all other stairs not considered to be service stairs or private stairs				

Guards and Handrails

A guard is required on the stair where the stair is higher than 23 ⁵/₈ inches. The guard may also serve as a handrail provided both guard & handrail OBC requirements are met. Guard pickets cannot be spaced more than 3 ¹⁵/₁₆ inches apart. No horizontal members are permitted to be attached to the guard between 5 ¹/₂ inches and 35 ⁷/₁₆ inches that could facilitate climbing.

Interior stairs with 3 or more risers and exterior stairs with 4 or more risers serving a house require a handrail. Handrails must be located at a height between 34 ¹/₁₆ inches and 42 ¹/₈ inches and must be graspable their entire length. On stairs serving a house, only one side of the stair is required to have a handrail.

SECTION

