

(Effective March 16, 2024)

**WAC 51-54A-1015 Section 1015—Guards.**

**1015.2 Where required.** *Guards* shall be located along open-sided walking surfaces, including mezzanines, equipment platforms, lofts in accordance with Section 420.14 of the International Building Code, aisles, stairs, ramps, and landings that are located more than 30 inches (762 mm) measured vertically to the floor or grade below at any point within 36 inches (914 mm) horizontally to the edge of the open side. *Guards* shall be provided at the perimeter of the occupied portions of an occupied roof. *Guards* shall be adequate in strength and attachment in accordance with Section 1607.9 of the International Building Code.

EXCEPTION:

*Guards* are not required for the following locations:

1. On the loading side of loading docks or piers.
2. On the audience side of stages and raised platforms, including stairs leading up to the stage and raised platforms.
3. On raised stage and platform floor areas, such as runways, ramps, and side stages used for entertainment or presentations.
4. At vertical openings in the performance area of stages and platforms.
5. At elevated walking surfaces appurtenant to stages and platforms for access to and utilization of special lighting or equipment.
6. Along vehicle service pits not accessible to the public.
7. In assembly seating areas at cross aisles in accordance with Section 1030.17.2.
8. On the loading side of station platforms on fixed guideway transit or passenger rail stations.
9. Portions of an occupied roof located less than 30 inches measured vertically to adjacent unoccupied roof areas when approved guards are present at the perimeter of the roof.
10. At an occupied portion of an occupied roof where a barrier approved by the building official is provided.

**1015.3 Height.** Required guards shall be not less than 42 inches (1067 mm) high, measured vertically as follows:

1. From the adjacent walking surfaces.
2. On *stairways* and stepped *aisles*, from the line connecting the leading edges of the tread nosings.
3. On *ramps* and ramped *aisles*, from the ramp surface at the *guard*.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. For occupancies in Group R-3 not more than three stories above grade in height and within individual *dwelling units* in occupancies in Group R-2 not more than three stories above grade in height with separate *means of egress*, required *guards* shall be not less than 36 inches (914 mm) in height measured vertically above the adjacent walking surfaces.
2. For occupancies in Group R-3, and within individual *dwelling units* in occupancies in Group R-2, *guards* on the open sides of *stairs* shall have a height not less than 34 inches (864 mm) measured vertically from a line connecting the leading edges of the treads.
3. For occupancies in Group R-3, and within individual *dwelling units* in occupancies in Group R-2, where the top of the *guard* serves as a *handrail* on the open sides of *stairs*, the top of the *guard* shall be not less than 34 inches (864 mm) and not more than 38 inches (965 mm) measured vertically from a line connecting the leading edges of the treads.
4. In areas with ceiling heights of 7 feet (2134 mm) or less in *lofts* constructed in accordance with Section 420.14, *guards* shall not be less than 36 inches (914 mm) in height or one-half of the clear height from the *loft* floor to the *loft* ceiling, whichever is less.
5. The *guard* height in assembly seating areas shall comply with Section 1030.17 as applicable.
6. Along *alternating tread devices* and ships ladders, *guards* where the top rail serves as a *handrail* shall have height not less than 30 inches (762 mm) and not more than 34 inches (864 mm), measured vertically from the leading edge of the device tread nosing.
7. In Group F occupancies where *exit access stairways* serve fewer than three stories and such *stairways* are not open to the public, and where the top of the *guard* also serves as a *handrail*, the top of the *guard* shall be not less than 34 inches (864 mm) and not more than 38 inches (965 mm) measured vertically from a line connecting the leading edges of the treads.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 19.27.031 and 19.27.074. WSR 23-23-106, § 51-54A-1015, filed 11/15/23, effective 3/16/24.]