



Stairs and Landings

Residential Code requirements

- Stair width shall be a minimum of 36" at all points above the handrail.
- Stair headroom height shall be a minimum of 6'-8".
Exception: Alterations to existing basement stairways shall have a minimum headroom in all parts of the stairway not less than 6'-4" (R305.2.2).
- A flight of stairs shall not have a vertical rise larger than 12' between floor levels or landings (R311.7.1.2).
- The maximum riser height of a stair is 7 ¾". The greatest riser height shall not exceed the smallest by 3/8". Risers shall not be open by more than 4" (R311.7.5.1).
Exception: The opening between adjacent treads is not limited on stairs with a total rise of 30" or less.
- The minimum tread width of a stair is 10". The greatest tread width shall not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8". A stair nosing, between ¾" and 1 ¼", is required when the tread width is less than 10". (R311.7.5.2).
- There shall be a floor or landing at the top and bottom of each stairway. The minimum width of a landing is 36" and the minimum depth of a landing is 36" (R311.7.6).
Exception: A floor or landing is not required at the top of an interior flight of stairs, including stairs in an enclosed garage, provided a door does not swing over the stairs.
- Landings or finished floors at the required egress door shall not be more than 1 ½" lower than the top of the threshold (R311.3.1).
Exception: The landing or floor on the exterior side shall not be more than 7" ¾" below the top of the threshold provided the door does not swing over the landing or floor.
- Doors other than the required egress door shall be provided with landings or floors not more than 7 ¾" below the top of the threshold (R311.3.2)
- A landing is not required if a stairway less than 30" in height is located on the exterior side of the door, provided the door does not swing over the stairway. The stairway height shall be measured vertically from the interior floor surface to the finished grade.
- Storm and screen doors shall be permitted to swing over all exterior stairs and landings (R311.3.3).
- Handrails shall be provided on at least one side of each continuous run of treads or flight with four or more risers (R311.7.8).
- Handrail height, measured vertically from the sloped plane adjoining the tread nosing, or finish surface of ramp slope, shall be not less than 34" and not more than 38" (R311.7.8).
- Handrails for stairways shall be continuous the full length of the flight, from a point directly above the top riser of the flight to a point directly above the lowest riser of the flight. Handrail ends shall be returned or shall terminate in newel posts or safety terminals. Handrails adjacent to a wall shall have a space of not less than 1 ½" between the wall and the handrails (R311.7.8.2).
- A Type 1 handrail is circular and shall have a diameter of at least 1 ¼" and not greater than 2" (R311.7.8.3).
- A Type 2 handrail shall have a perimeter greater than 6 ¼" and have a graspable finger recess on both sides of the profile (R311.7.8.3).
- Safety glazing is required where the bottom exposed edge of the glazing is less than 36" above the plane of the adjacent walking surface of stairways, landings between flights of stairs and ramps (R308.4.6).
- Safety glazing is required at glazing adjacent to the landing at the bottom of a stairway where the glazing is less than 36" above the landing and within 60" horizontally of the bottom tread (R308.4.7).
- All interior and exterior stairways shall be provided with a means to illuminate the stairs, including the landings and treads (R303.7). There shall be a wall switch at each floor level to control the lighting outlet where the stairway has six or more risers.
- Enclosed accessible space under stairs shall have walls, under-stair surface and any soffits protected on the enclosed side with ½" gypsum board (R302.7).

Call the City of Mendota Heights' Department of Building Safety at 651 452 1850 if you have questions, to request a permit or to schedule an inspection (8:00-4:30 M-F).