

**TITLE:** GUARDRAIL  
**VERSION:** VI.3  
**DATE PUBLISHED:** 7/31/20

**DEFINITION:** A protective railing that, for the purpose of this inspection, is at least 36 inches or greater in height.  
**PURPOSE:** Serve as a barrier to protect against danger along balconies, stairs, decks, rooftops, some hallways and retaining walls.  
**NAME VARIANTS:** Railing; Rail; Bannister; Balustrade  
**COMMON MATERIALS:** Metal; Wood; Plastic  
**COMMON COMPONENTS:** Railing; Post; Top rail; Mid rail; Vertical rail; Baluster; Anchors; Brackets  
**LOCATION:**  Unit Balconies, stairs, decks, hallways  
 Inside Balconies, stairs, decks, hallways  
 Outside None  
**MORE INFORMATION:** For the purpose of this inspection, a guardrail is required when there is an elevated walking surface with a drop off of 30 inches or greater measured vertically.

**DEFICIENCY 1:** Guardrail is missing where required  
**LOCATION:**  Unit  Inside

**DEFICIENCY 2:** Guardrail component(s) missing  
**LOCATION:**  Unit  Inside

**DEFICIENCY 3:** Guardrail is not secure  
**LOCATION:**  Unit  Inside

**DEFICIENCY 4:** Guardrail is not at least 36 inches in height  
**LOCATION:**  Unit  Inside

**DEFICIENCY I — UNIT: GUARDRAIL IS MISSING WHERE REQUIRED**

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** The guardrail is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but now not present or is incomplete) where required.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION:** Life-Threatening This is a life-threatening issue requiring a 24-hour repair, correction, or act of abatement.

**CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 24 hours

**HCV — CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 24 hours

**RATIONALE:**

CODE	CATEGORY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXPLANATION
R2	Safety	Direct	Resident could be injured because of this condition.	If a guardrail is missing, then this increases the probability of falls that may lead to injury.
M1	Corrective Maintenance	Direct	It is reasonable to expect a tenant to report this deficiency, and for facilities management to prioritize a work order response to fix that deficiency.	If a guardrail is missing, then the resident will likely report it and the presence of this defect may indicate that complaint-based work orders are not being addressed.
M2	Routine Maintenance	Direct	It is reasonable to expect that this deficiency would be identified through routine daily observations and facilities management would prioritize work orders to fix this deficiency.	If a guardrail is missing, then it is reasonable to expect identification through routine daily observations and facilities management would prioritize work orders to fix this deficiency.

**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

**OBSERVATION:** - Look for the presence of a guardrail, specifically near an elevated walking surface where there is a drop off 30 inches or greater measured vertically.

**REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None

**ACTION:** - Measure the drop off distance if unsure if vertical distance is 30 inches or greater.

**More Information:** - None

**TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:**

**REQUIRED:** - Distance measuring device

**USEFUL:** - None

**DEFICIENCY I — INSIDE: GUARDRAIL IS MISSING WHERE REQUIRED**

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** The guardrail is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but now not present or is incomplete) where required.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION:** Life-Threatening This is a life-threatening issue requiring a 24-hour repair, correction, or act of abatement.

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M2	Routine Maintenance	Direct	It is reasonable to expect that this deficiency would be identified through routine daily observations and facilities management would prioritize work orders to fix this deficiency.	If a guardrail is missing, then it is reasonable to expect identification through routine daily observations and facilities management would prioritize work orders to fix this deficiency.

**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

**OBSERVATION:** - Look for the presence of a guardrail, specifically near an elevated walking surface where there is a drop off 30 inches or greater measured vertically.

**REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None

**ACTION:** - Measure the drop off distance if unsure if vertical distance is 30 inches or greater.

**More Information:** - None

**TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:**

**REQUIRED:** - Distance measuring device

**USEFUL:** - None

DEFICIENCY 2 — UNIT: GUARDRAIL COMPONENT(S) MISSING

DEFICIENCY CRITERIA: Guardrail component(s) missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but now not present or is incomplete) resulting in a spherical gap of 4 inches in diameter or greater.

HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION: Severe Non-Life-Threatening This is a severe health and safety issue that would cause a serious undue burden on the resident if the deficiency is present for an extended period of time.

CORRECTION TIMEFRAME: 24 hours

HCV — CORRECTION TIMEFRAME: 30 days

RATIONALE:

CODE	CATEGORY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXPLANATION
R2	Safety	Direct	Resident could be injured because of this condition.	If a guardrail is missing components, then this increases the probability of falls that may lead to injury.
M1	Corrective Maintenance	Direct	It is reasonable to expect a tenant to report this deficiency, and for facilities management to prioritize a work order response to fix that deficiency.	If a guardrail is missing components, then the resident will likely report it and the presence of this defect may indicate that complaint-based work orders are not being addressed.
M2	Routine Maintenance	Direct	It is reasonable to expect that this deficiency would be identified through routine daily observations and facilities management would prioritize work orders to fix this deficiency.	If a guardrail is missing components, then it is likely to be identified through daily maintenance activities and its presence may indicate that self-generated work orders are not being addressed.

INSPECTION PROCESS:

OBSERVATION: - Look at all elevated walking surfaces and identify any guardrails.  
 - Inspect guardrails for missing components (e.g., balusters or anything creating an opening) that allow passage of a sphere of at least 4 inches in diameter.

REQUEST FOR HELP: - None

ACTION: - Measure the opening.

More Information: - This deficiency applies to missing components that create a gap in the barrier and does not apply to railings on older properties that were built with a wider baluster spacing under the current code at the time of construction.

TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:

REQUIRED: - Distance measuring device

USEFUL: - None

DEFICIENCY 2 — INSIDE: GUARDRAIL COMPONENT(S) MISSING

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** Guardrail component(s) missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but now not present or is incomplete) resulting in a spherical gap of 4 inches in diameter or greater.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION:** Severe Non-Life-Threatening This is a severe health and safety issue that would cause a serious undue burden on the resident if the deficiency is present for an extended period of time.

**CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 24 hours

**HCV — CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 30 days

**RATIONALE:**

CODE	CATEGORY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXPLANATION
R2	Safety	Direct	Resident could be injured because of this condition.	If a guardrail is missing components, then this increases the probability of falls that may lead to injury.
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**REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None

**ACTION:** - Measure the opening.

**More Information:** - This deficiency applies to missing components that create a gap in the barrier and does not apply to railings on older properties that were built with a wider baluster spacing under the current code at the time of construction.

**TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:**

**REQUIRED:** - Distance measuring device

**USEFUL:** - None

DEFICIENCY 3 — UNIT: GUARDRAIL IS NOT SECURE

DEFICIENCY CRITERIA: There is movement at the guard rail anchor points.

HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION: Standard This is a standard health and safety issue. A repair, correction, or act of abatement for this deficiency should occur within 30 days.

CORRECTION TIMEFRAME: Within 30 days

HCV — CORRECTION TIMEFRAME: Within 30 days

RATIONALE:

CODE	CATEGORY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXPLANATION
R2	Safety	Direct	Resident could be injured because of this condition.	If guardrail is not secure, then this increases the probability of falls that may lead to injury.
R6	Usability and Operability of Fixtures	Direct	Because of this condition, the resident is unable to use certain fixtures, features, or appliances, which are reasonably assumed to be part of their rent.	If guardrail is not secure, then resident may be unable to use a feature that is expected to be provided and maintained as part of their rent.
M1	Corrective Maintenance	Direct	It is reasonable to expect a tenant to report this deficiency, and for facilities management to prioritize a work order response to fix that deficiency.	If guardrail is not secure, then the resident will likely report it and the presence of this defect may indicate that complaint-based work orders are not being addressed.
M2	Routine Maintenance	Direct	It is reasonable to expect that this deficiency would be identified through routine daily observations and facilities management would prioritize work orders to fix this deficiency.	If guardrail is not secure, then it is likely to be identified through daily maintenance activities and its presence may indicate that self-generated work orders are not being addressed.

INSPECTION PROCESS:

OBSERVATION: - Observe the guardrail.

REQUEST FOR HELP: - None

ACTION: - Grab the guardrail and apply moderate force to each section, pushing and pulling rapidly to ensure it is securely affixed.

More Information: - Top rails capable of withstanding 200 pounds of pressure from any direction.  
 - Mid rails capable of withstanding 150 pounds of pressure from any direction.



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TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:

REQUIRED: - None

USEFUL: - None

**DEFICIENCY 3 — INSIDE: GUARDRAIL IS NOT SECURE**

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 - Mid rails capable of withstanding 150 pounds of pressure from any direction.



TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:

REQUIRED: - None

USEFUL: - None

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**DEFICIENCY 4 — UNIT: GUARDRAIL IS NOT AT LEAST 36 INCHES IN HEIGHT**

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** Guardrail is not at least 36 inches in height.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION:** Standard This is a standard health and safety issue. A repair, correction, or act of abatement for this deficiency should occur within 30 days.

**CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** Within 30 days

**HCV — CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** Within 30 days

**RATIONALE:**

CODE	CATEGORY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXPLANATION
R2	Safety	Direct	Resident could be injured because of this condition.	If guardrail is not at least 36 inches in height, then this increases the probability of falls that may lead to injury.
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**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

**OBSERVATION:** - Observe the guardrail.

**REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None

**ACTION:** - Measure height of the guardrail.

**More Information:** - None

**TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:**

**REQUIRED:** - Distance measuring device

**USEFUL:** - None

**DEFICIENCY 4 — INSIDE: GUARDRAIL IS NOT AT LEAST 36 INCHES IN HEIGHT**

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** Guardrail is not at least 36 inches in height.

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**CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** Within 30 days

**HCV — CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** Within 30 days

**RATIONALE:**

CODE	CATEGORY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXPLANATION
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**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

**OBSERVATION:** - Observe the guardrail.

**REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None

**ACTION:** - Measure height of the guardrail.

**More Information:** - None

**TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:**

**REQUIRED:** - Distance measuring device

**USEFUL:** - None

**SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

**TITLE:** GUARDRAIL  
**VERSION:** VI.3  
**DATE PUBLISHED:** 7/31/20

FIELD	CHANGE	VERSION	DATE
Overall Formatting	Complete rework of document format and layout	VI.3	2020-07-31
Definition	Revised definition	VI.3	2020-07-31
Purpose	Field added	VI.3	2020-07-31
Name Variants	Revised name variants	VI.3	2020-07-31
Location	Revised inspectable locations	VI.3	2020-07-31
More Information	Field added	VI.3	2020-07-31
<b>Deficiency 1</b>	<b>Separated by inspectable locations — Unit and Inside</b>	<b>VI.3</b>	<b>2020-07-31</b>
Title	Added inspectable locations		
Deficiency Criteria	Revised deficiency criteria		
Health and Safety Determination	Revised to “Life-Threatening” determination; added standardized description		
Correction Timeframe	Field added; response input as “24 hours”		
HCV — Correction Timeframe	Field added; response input as “24 hours”		
Rationale	Revised rationale categories, types, and explanations; added standardized codes and descriptions		
Inspection Process	Revised observation, request for help, action, and more information		
Tools or Equipment	Field added to deficiency		
<b>Deficiency 2</b>	<b>Separated by inspectable locations — Unit and Inside</b>	<b>VI.3</b>	<b>2020-07-31</b>
Title	Revised title; added inspectable locations		
Deficiency Criteria	Revised deficiency criteria		
Health and Safety Determination	Revised to “Severe Non-Life-Threatening” determination; added standardized description		
Correction Timeframe	Field added; response input as “24 hours”		

HCV – Correction Timeframe	Field added; response input as “30 days”		
Rationale	Revised rationale categories, types, and explanations; added standardized codes and descriptions		
Inspection Process	Revised observation, request for help, action, and more information		
Tools or Equipment	Field added to deficiency		
<b>Deficiency 3</b>	<b>Separated by inspectable locations – Unit and Inside</b>	<b>VI.3</b>	<b>2020-07-31</b>
Title	Added inspectable locations		
Deficiency Criteria	Revised deficiency criteria		
Health and Safety Determination	Added standardized description		
Correction Timeframe	Field added; response input as “Within 30 days”		
HCV – Correction Timeframe	Field added; response input as “Within 30 days”		
Rationale	Revised rationale categories, types, and explanations; added standardized codes and descriptions		
Inspection Process	Revised observation, request for help, action, and more information		
Tools or Equipment	Field added to deficiency; response revised		
<b>Deficiency 4</b>	<b>Added by inspectable locations – Unit and Inside</b>	<b>VI.3</b>	<b>2020-07-31</b>
Title	Added title; added inspectable locations		
Deficiency Criteria	Added deficiency criteria		
Health and Safety Determination	Added “Standard” determination; added standardized description		
Correction Timeframe	Field added; response input as “Within 30 days”		
HCV – Correction Timeframe	Field added; response input as “Within 30 days”		
Rationale	Added rationale categories, types, and explanations; added standardized codes and descriptions		
Inspection Process	Added observation, request for help, action, and more information		
Tools or Equipment	Field added to deficiency		
<b>Rationales</b>	<b>Updated following in-house review and public comment</b>	<b>VI-2</b>	<b>2019-12-23</b>
<b>Health and Safety Determinations</b>	<b>Updated following in-house review and public comment</b>	<b>VI-2</b>	<b>2019-12-23</b>