

# Handrails

**Definition:** A structure designed to be grasped to provide a user with stability, support, and assisting in descending or ascending stairs.

At least one handrail is required for each continuous run of stairs with four or more risers.  
Two handrails are required for ramps if their length is greater than 72 inches.

**Name** bannister, railing  
**Variants:**

**Most Common Materials:** plastic, metal, wood

**Most Common Components:** rail, baluster, brackets, anchor

## Location & Inspection of Handrails

Abilities or Knowledge Needed:	- Visual acuity for location & inspection - Mobility for access to all areas of the property - Understanding of item's components
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Tools for Location & Inspection	Useful:	n/a
	Required:	length measuring device

Common Locations:	Unit/Inside:	stairs, hallways, ramps, hallways, elevators
	Outside:	stairwells, ramps, elevators

How to Locate:	Visual Observation:	Look for near stairs, ramps, and along walls in hallways and elevators, especially near entrances and in buildings with multiple floors.
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Possible Deficiencies:	Deficiency 1:	Handrails are missing where required
	Deficiency 2:	Handrails are not secure

## Deficiency 1: Handrails are missing where required

Rationale:	Maintenance:	Indicates maintenance is not identifying deficiencies or responding to self-generated or complaint-driven work orders
	Health and Safety:	Increase probability that residents could fall and become injured.
	Operability:	Limits use of stairs/ramps.
Health and Safety	Standard:	This is a standard health and safety issue. A repair, correction, or act of abatement for this deficiency should occur within 30 days.
How to Inspect:	Visual Observation:	Look for all areas with stairs or ramps, or along the walls in hallways where handrails may be present.
	Action:	(Stairs) Count the number of steps.  (Ramps) Measure the length of the ramp.
Record deficiency if:	A handrail is missing where required. For stairs, a handrail is required if 4 or more steps are present. For ramps, handrails are required on both sides if the length of the ramps is longer than 72 inches.	

## Deficiency 2: Handrails are not secure

Rationale:	Maintenance:	Indicates maintenance is not identifying deficiencies or responding to self-generated or complaint-driven work orders
	Health and Safety:	Increase probability that residents could fall and become injured.
	Operability:	Limits use of stairs/ramps.
Health and Safety	Standard:	This is a standard health and safety issue. A repair, correction, or act of abatement for this deficiency should occur within 30 days.
How to Inspect:	Action:	<p>Grab the handrail and rapidly push and pull the handrail with moderate force. Perform this action at both ends and the middle of the handrail. If there is no movement, disregard this deficiency. If there is movement, continue.</p> <p>Go to the anchored portion of the handrail where the greatest amount of movement occurs. Identify any portion of the rail that you feel movement or instability and find the nearest anchor point (from wall, or floor) Use your length measuring device and place the end of the tool in the center/middle of the handrail while the handrail is in a resting position, as in, you are not applying force. Then apply moderate force to push/pull the handrail in the direction that your length measuring device is measuring. Measure the distance between these two points.</p>
Record deficiency if:	There is movement of the handrail of approximately ½ inch or greater in any direction.	