

**TITLE:** HANDRAIL  
**VERSION:** V2.1  
**DATE PUBLISHED:** 4/2/21

**DEFINITION:** A rail fixed to posts or a wall for people to hold on to for support.  
**PURPOSE:** A rail designed to be grasped by the hand to provide stability or support. Handrails are commonly used while ascending or descending stairways and escalators in order to prevent injurious falls.  
**NAME VARIANTS:** Bannister; Railing  
**COMMON MATERIALS:** Metal; Wood  
**COMMON COMPONENTS:** Rail; Baluster; Brackets; Anchor  
**LOCATION:**  Unit Stairs, hallways, ramps  
 Inside Stairs, hallways, ramps, elevators  
 Outside Stairs, ramps, elevators  
**MORE INFORMATION:** None

**DEFICIENCY 1:** Handrail is missing.  
**LOCATION:**  Unit  Inside  Outside

**DEFICIENCY 2:** Handrail is not secure.  
**LOCATION:**  Unit  Inside  Outside

**DEFICIENCY 3:** Handrail is not functionally adequate.  
**LOCATION:**  Unit  Inside  Outside

**DEFICIENCY I — UNIT: HANDRAIL IS MISSING.**

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

**HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION:** Standard      The Standard Health and Safety category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the property, present a moderate risk of an adverse medical event requiring a healthcare visit; cause temporary harm; or if left untreated, cause or worsen a chronic condition that may have long-lasting adverse health effects; or that the physical security or safety of a resident or their property could be compromised.

**CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 30 days

**HCV PASS / FAIL:** Fail

**HCV CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 30 days

**RATIONALE:**

CODE	CATEGORY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXPLANATION
R2	Safety	Direct	Resident could be injured because of this condition.	If a handrail is missing, then there is an increased 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 a handrail is missing, then the resident is unable to use a feature that is expected to be provided and maintained as part of their rent.
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 handrail is missing, then it is likely to be observed during daily maintenance activities, and the presence of this deficiency may indicate that self-generated work orders are not being addressed.

**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

**OBSERVATION:** - Look for all areas with stairs or ramps, or along the walls in hallways where handrails may be present.  
 - Verify a handrail is present on at least one side of each continuous run of treads.

**REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None

**ACTION:** - Stairs: Count the number of steps.  
 - Ramp: Measure the length and rise of the ramp.

**More Information:** - Stairs: A handrail is required if 4 or more risers are present.  
 - Ramp: When a ramp has a rise greater than 6 inches or a horizontal projection greater than 72 inches, then handrails must be present on both sides.

**TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:**

**REQUIRED:** - Distance measuring device

**USEFUL:** - None

**DEFICIENCY I — INSIDE: HANDRAIL IS MISSING.**

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

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**RATIONALE:**

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**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

**OBSERVATION:** - Look for all areas with stairs or ramps, or along the walls in hallways where handrails may be present.  
 - Verify a handrail is present on at least one side of each continuous run of treads.

**REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None

**ACTION:** - Stairs: Count the number of steps.  
 - Ramp: Measure the length and rise of the ramp.

**More Information:** - Stairs: A handrail is required if 4 or more risers are present.  
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**TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:**

**REQUIRED:** - Distance measuring device

**USEFUL:** - None

DEFICIENCY I — OUTSIDE: HANDRAIL IS MISSING.

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INSPECTION PROCESS:

OBSERVATION: - Look for all areas with stairs or ramps, or along the walls in hallways where handrails may be present.  
 - Verify a handrail is present on at least one side of each continuous run of treads.

REQUEST FOR HELP: - None

ACTION: - Stairs: Count the number of steps.  
 - Ramp: Measure the length and rise of the ramp.

More Information: - Stairs: A handrail is required if 4 or more risers are present.  
 - Ramp: When a ramp has a rise greater than 6 inches or a horizontal projection greater than 72 inches, then handrails must be present on both sides.

TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:

REQUIRED: - Distance measuring device

USEFUL: - None

**DEFICIENCY 2 — UNIT:** HANDRAIL IS NOT SECURE.

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** There is movement in the anchors of the handrail.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION:** Standard  
 The Standard Health and Safety category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the property, present a moderate risk of an adverse medical event requiring a healthcare visit; cause temporary harm; or if left untreated, cause or worsen a chronic condition that may have long-lasting adverse health effects; or that the physical security or safety of a resident or their property could be compromised.

**CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 30 days

**HCV PASS / FAIL:** Fail

**HCV CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 30 days

**RATIONALE:**

CODE	CATEGORY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXPLANATION
R2	Safety	Direct	Resident could be injured because of this condition.	If a handrail is not secure, then there is an increased 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 handrail is not secure, then the resident will likely report this deficiency, and its presence 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 handrail is not secure, then it is likely to be observed during daily maintenance activities, and the presence of this deficiency may indicate that self-generated work orders are not being addressed.

**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

**OBSERVATION:** - Look for movement of the handrail when tested.

**REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None

**ACTION:**

- Grab the handrail and rapidly push and pull the 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.
- Ensure handrails are firmly attached with no movement at anchor points.

**More Information:** - The handrail and top rail of the stair rail system must be able to withstand, without failure, at least 200 pounds of weight applied within 2 inches of the top edge in any downward or outward direction, at any point along the top edge.

TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:

REQUIRED: - None

USEFUL: - None

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**DEFICIENCY 2 — INSIDE: HANDRAIL IS NOT SECURE.**

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** There is movement in the anchors of the handrail.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION:** Standard  
 The Standard Health and Safety category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the property, present a moderate risk of an adverse medical event requiring a healthcare visit; cause temporary harm; or if left untreated, cause or worsen a chronic condition that may have long-lasting adverse health effects; or that the physical security or safety of a resident or their property could be compromised.

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**REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None

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TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:

REQUIRED: - None

USEFUL: - None

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**DEFICIENCY 2 — OUTSIDE: HANDRAIL IS NOT SECURE.**

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** There is movement in the anchors of the handrail.

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 The Standard Health and Safety category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the property, present a moderate risk of an adverse medical event requiring a healthcare visit; cause temporary harm; or if left untreated, cause or worsen a chronic condition that may have long-lasting adverse health effects; or that the physical security or safety of a resident or their property could be compromised.

**CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 30 days

**HCV PASS / FAIL:** Fail

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**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

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**REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None

**ACTION:**

- Grab the handrail and rapidly push and pull the with moderate force.
- Perform this action at both ends and the middle of the handrail.
- If there is no movement, disregard this deficiency.
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**More Information:** - The handrail and top rail of the stair rail system must be able to withstand, without failure, at least 200 pounds of weight applied within 2 inches of the top edge in any downward or outward direction, at any point along the top edge.

TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:

REQUIRED: - None

USEFUL: - None

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**DEFICIENCY 3 — UNIT: HANDRAIL IS NOT FUNCTIONALLY ADEQUATE.**

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** Handrail is not functionally adequate (i.e., it cannot reasonably be grasped by hand to provide stability or support when ascending or descending stairways).  
 OR  
 Handrail is not continuous for the full length of each stair flight.  
 OR  
 Handrail is not between 28 inches and 42 inches in height.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION:** Standard      The Standard Health and Safety category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the property, present a moderate risk of an adverse medical event requiring a healthcare visit; cause temporary harm; or if left untreated, cause or worsen a chronic condition that may have long-lasting adverse health effects; or that the physical security or safety of a resident or their property could be compromised.

**CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 30 days  
**HCV PASS / FAIL:** Fail  
**HCV CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 30 days

**RATIONALE:**

CODE	CATEGORY	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXPLANATION
R2	Safety	Direct	Resident could be injured because of this condition.	If a handrail is not functionally adequate or not continuous for the full length of each stair flight, or not between 28 inches and 42 inches in height, there may be an increased safety risk to the resident of falling down a staircase, which may result in injury.

**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

- OBSERVATION:** - Look to ensure that the handrail is continuous for the full length of each stair flight.
- REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None
- ACTION:** - Measure the height of the handrail.  
 - Determine if the handrail is functionally adequate.
- More Information:** - None

**TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:**

- REQUIRED:** - Distance measuring device
- USEFUL:** - None

**DEFICIENCY 3 — INSIDE: HANDRAIL IS NOT FUNCTIONALLY ADEQUATE.**

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** Handrail is not functionally adequate (i.e., it cannot reasonably be grasped by hand to provide stability or support when ascending or descending stairways).  
 OR  
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**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

- OBSERVATION:** - Look to ensure that the handrail is continuous for the full length of each stair flight.
- REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None
- ACTION:** - Measure the height of the handrail.  
 - Determine if the handrail is functionally adequate.
- More Information:** - None

**TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:**

- REQUIRED:** - Distance measuring device
- USEFUL:** - None

**DEFICIENCY 3 — OUTSIDE: HANDRAIL IS NOT FUNCTIONALLY ADEQUATE.**

**DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:** Handrail is not functionally adequate (i.e., it cannot reasonably be grasped by hand to provide stability or support when ascending or descending stairways).  
 OR  
 Handrail is not continuous for the full length of each stair flight.  
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**CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 30 days  
**HCV PASS / FAIL:** Fail  
**HCV CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:** 30 days

**RATIONALE:**

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**INSPECTION PROCESS:**

- OBSERVATION:** - Look to ensure that the handrail is continuous for the full length of each stair flight.
- REQUEST FOR HELP:** - None
- ACTION:** - Measure the height of the handrail.  
 - Determine if the handrail is functionally adequate.
- More Information:** - None

**TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT:**

- REQUIRED:** - Distance measuring device
- USEFUL:** - None

**SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

**TITLE:** HANDRAIL  
**VERSION:** V2.1  
**DATE PUBLISHED:** 4/2/21

FIELD	CHANGE	VERSION	DATE
----	Copyedits	V2.1	2021-04-02
<b>Deficiency 1</b>		<b>V2.0</b>	<b>2020-10-28</b>
Title	Copyedits		
Health and Safety Determination	Added standardized description		
HCV Pass / Fail	Field added; response input as "Fail"		
<b>Deficiency 2</b>		<b>V2.0</b>	<b>2020-10-28</b>
Health and Safety Determination	Added standardized description		
HCV Pass / Fail	Field added; response input as "Fail"		
<b>Deficiency 3</b>		<b>V2.0</b>	<b>2020-10-28</b>
Title	Revised title		
Deficiency Criteria	Revised deficiency criteria		
Health and Safety Determination	Added standardized description		
HCV Pass / Fail	Field added; response input as "Fail"		
Rationale	Revised rationale explanations		
Inspection Process	Revised observation, request for help, action, and more information		
<b>Overall Formatting</b>	<b>Complete rework of document format and layout</b>	<b>V1.3</b>	<b>2020-07-31</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<b>Revised definition</b>	<b>V1.3</b>	<b>2020-07-31</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Field added</b>	<b>V1.3</b>	<b>2020-07-31</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Revised inspectable locations</b>	<b>V1.3</b>	<b>2020-07-31</b>
<b>More Information</b>	<b>Field added</b>	<b>V1.3</b>	<b>2020-07-31</b>
<b>Deficiency 1</b>	<b>Separated by inspectable locations — Unit, Inside, and Outside</b>	<b>V1.3</b>	<b>2020-07-31</b>

Title	Revised title; added inspectable locations		
Deficiency Criteria	Revised deficiency criteria		
Health and Safety Determination	Revised to "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	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, Inside, and Outside</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	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 3</b>	<b>Added by inspectable locations – Unit, Inside, and Outside</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>
<b>Most Common Materials</b>	<b>Updated</b>	<b>VI-1</b>	<b>2019-11-26</b>
<b>Abilities or Knowledge Needed</b>	<b>Updated</b>	<b>VI-1</b>	<b>2019-11-26</b>
<b>How to Locate</b>	<b>Updated</b>	<b>VI-1</b>	<b>2019-11-26</b>
<b>Deficiency 1</b>	<b>Updated</b>	<b>VI-1</b>	<b>2019-11-26</b>
Rationale	Updated		
Inspection Process and Procedure	Updated		
Record Deficiency	Updated		
<b>Deficiency 2</b>	<b>Updated</b>	<b>VI-1</b>	<b>2019-11-26</b>
Rationale	Updated		
Inspection Process and Procedure	Updated		
Record Deficiency	Updated		