

To comply with the Alberta [Safety Codes Act](#) (Part 1, Section 5), individuals such as owners and contractors related to any thing, process, or activity to which the Act applies must ensure it is maintained and undertaken in a safe manner. Alberta's [Occupational Health and Safety \(OH&S\)](#) Act, Regulation and Code set minimum health, safety and wellness standards in Alberta's workplaces, including requirements for entrances, walkways, stairways and ladders (Part 8, particularly Sections 121-123).

This document is intended to provide common examples of site accesses, not to be exhaustive. The City's duty under OHS legislation is to protect its workers; as such, if inspectors notice an OHS hazard, they will not enter the area. Keep sites accessible to get inspections completed safely and smoothly.

Below are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable access.

ACCEPTABLE	UNACCEPTABLE
 <p>This entry meets the minimum requirements for 4 steps, however, having the handrail extend from the top of the stairs all the way to the door wall would be safer. The blocking under the walkway must also be solid. This setup is at the limits of acceptable access and safe access may depend on site conditions.</p>	 <p>This ramp does not meet the width or the handrail requirements of the OHS Code.</p>

**ACCEPTABLE**



Solid supports and handrail in place for safe access.

**UNACCEPTABLE**



Lack of handrail and an open excavation make this unsafe.



Wide stairs and 3 risers so handrails are not required.



Non-continuous and missing handrail make this unsafe.

**ACCEPTABLE**



Handrails on both sides, firmly anchored for safe access.

**UNACCEPTABLE**



This stairway has 5+ risers, making a handrail mandatory. Since both sides of this stairway are currently open, a handrail is needed on both sides (unless one side is walled in).



This stairway has 5+ risers, making this a handrail mandatory. Note: Open framing/studs on the side do not constitute a handrail. A secured, graspable rail must be installed at 800mm–920mm height (2.62-3 ft).



This stairway has 5+ risers, making a handrail mandatory. Note: Open framing/studs on the side do not constitute a handrail. A secured, graspable rail must be installed at 800mm–920mm height (2.62-3 ft).

ACCEPTABLE



These stairs meet the requirement for a handrail on the open side. While the additional handrail on the right is not necessary, it provides an extra level of safety.

UNACCEPTABLE



While the framing is there, it doesn't technically "count" as a handrail because you can't get a continuous, sliding grip on vertical studs. To be compliant with the code, at least one graspable rail needs to be added that runs the full length of the stairs. It doesn't have to be on both sides, but it does need to be one uninterrupted piece from top to bottom.

Existing vertical framing does not meet the "continually graspable" requirement for a handrail. To achieve compliance, a secured, uninterrupted rail must be installed on at least one side for the full length of the stairs.

**ACCEPTABLE**



Guardrails are in place around the floor opening and going down the stairs.

**UNACCEPTABLE**



No guardrails around the floor opening and no handrail on stairs.



Example of proper opening protection with guardrails.



No solid guardrail or rigid material to prevent a fall.

**ACCEPTABLE**



Secure guardrail installed to prevent fall hazards.

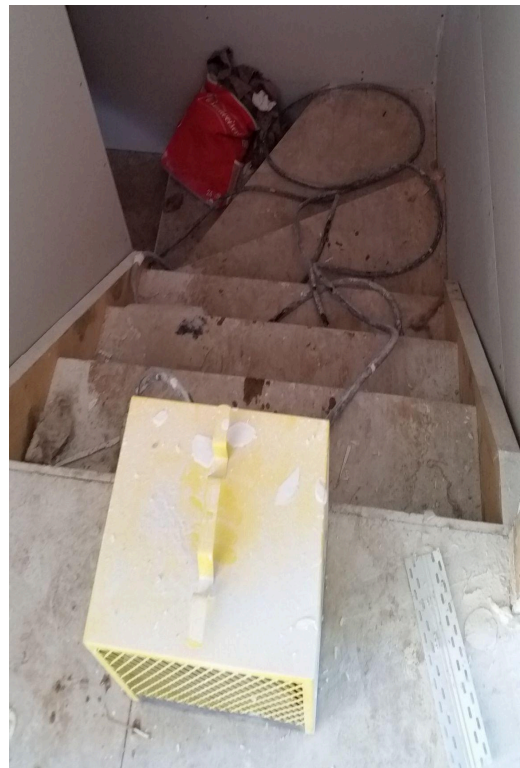
**UNACCEPTABLE**



Guardrail is not to the edge of the opening leaving a fall hazard.



This stairway has a continuous, graspable handrail for its full length. With the opposite side being a closed wall, this is safe.



While it's true that walls provide some stability, they do not provide a continually graspable surface and cannot be used as a substitute for a handrail. A proper, secured, graspable handrail is still required to allow for sliding grip and stable points of contact.

**ACCEPTABLE**

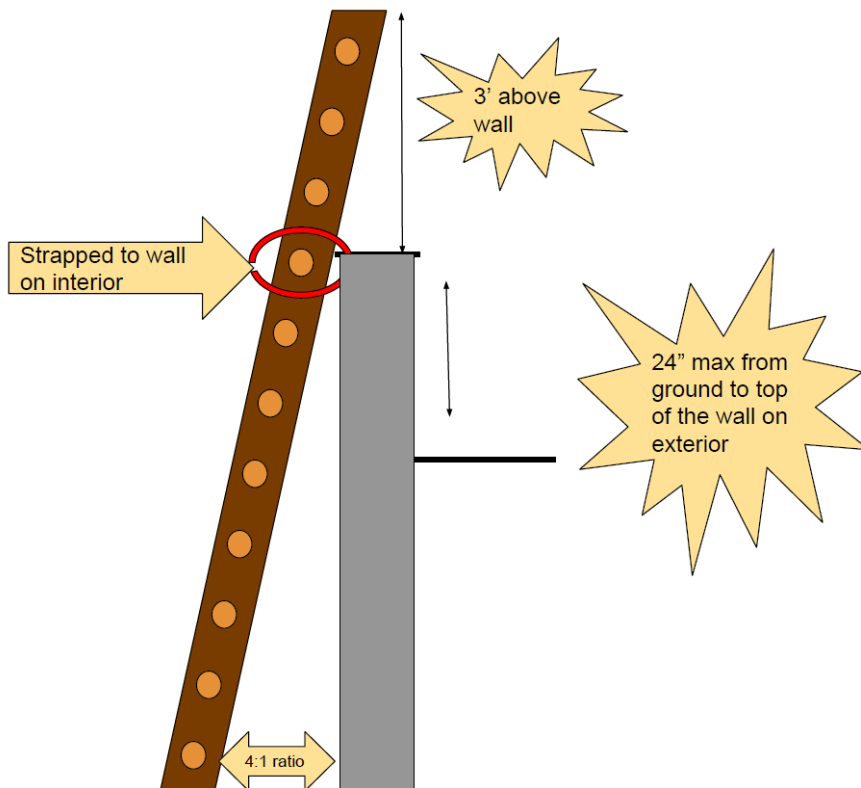


Safe and continuous handrail on stairway.

**UNACCEPTABLE**

Intentionally left blank

**ACCEPTABLE**



**ACCEPTABLE**

