

Basic Stairs

This tip sheet reflects code requirements of the 2021 International Residential Code (IRC) with Washington State Amendments.

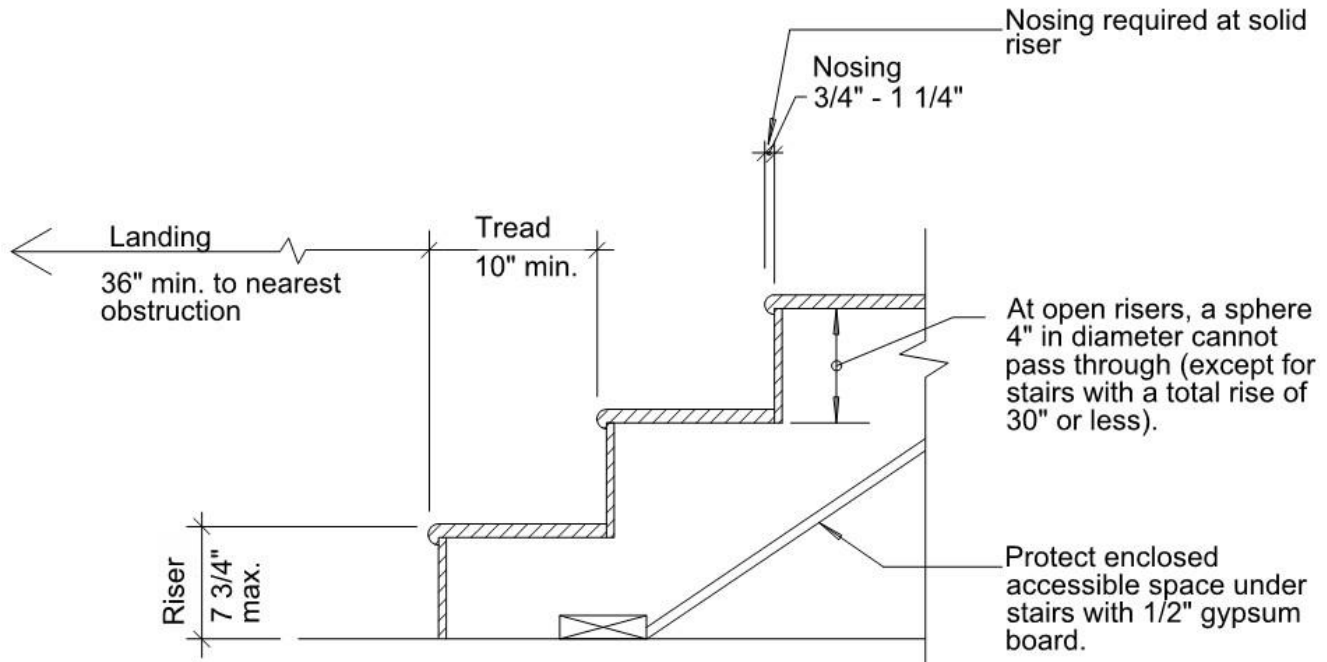


Figure 1: Typical Stair Treads and Risers

Stair Treads and Risers

- The largest tread or riser within any flight of stairs is not to exceed the smallest by more than 3/8 inches. (R311.7.5.1)

Illumination

- Interior stairways shall be provided with an artificial light source to illuminate the landings and treads. There shall be a wall switch at each floor level to control the light source where the stairway has 6 or more risers. (R303.7)
- Exterior stairways shall be provided with an artificial light source located at the top landing of the stairway and located at the bottom landing where accessing a basement. Stairway illumination shall receive primary power from the building wiring. (R303.8)

Handrails

- Handrails are required on at least one side for stairways with four or more risers. See Tip Sheet 2 for additional information regarding handrails. (R311.7.8)

Landings

- Landings are required at the top and the bottom of stairways. A floor 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. (R311.7.6)
- A landing extending the width of the stairs and measuring a minimum of 36 inches in the direction of travel is required at the top and bottom of every stairway. (R311.7.6)

Circular, Winding, or Spiral Stairways

- For exceptions related to the construction of circular, winding, or spiral stairways, see IRC R311.7.5.2.1 and R311.7.10.

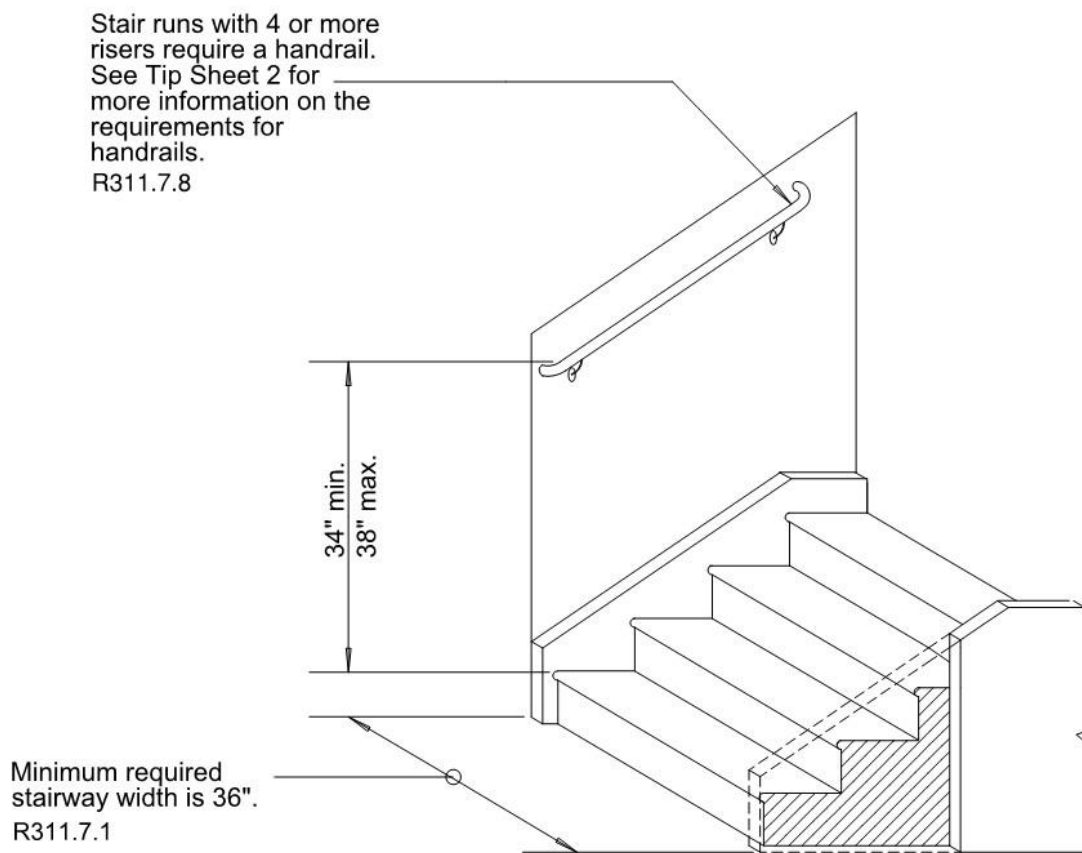


Figure 2: Typical Stair Elevation

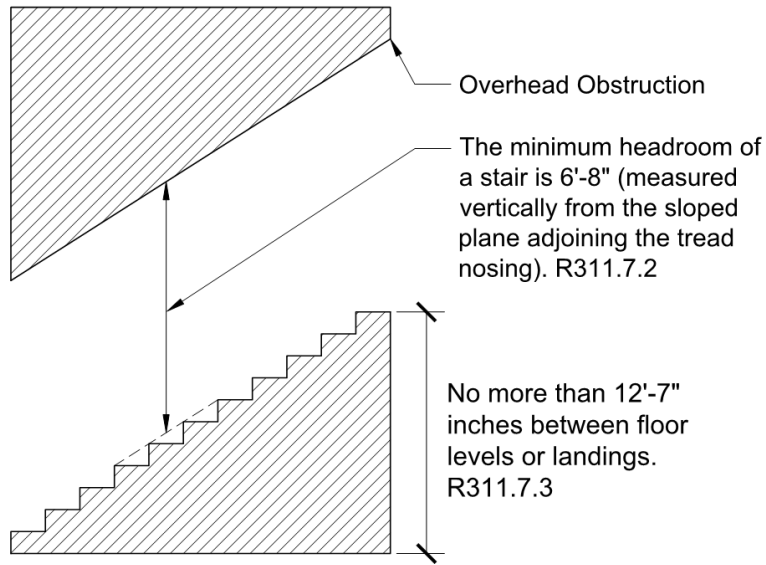


Figure 3: Headroom Clearance Requirements