

Stairs, Ramps and Runways

About 8 minutes to deliver

Four risers means a handrail, temporary stairs are where people fall carrying things, and the ramp with the bounce in it is a warning.

People treat stairs as neutral ground. They are one of the most reliable sources of injury on a site, and temporary stairs are worse than permanent ones in every way that matters.

THE RULES WORTH CARRYING IN YOUR HEAD

- A stairway or ladder is required wherever there is a break in elevation of 19 inches or more and no ramp, runway or hoist — 1926.1051(a).
- Four or more risers, or a rise of more than 30 inches, whichever is less: at least one handrail, plus a stairrail along each unprotected side or edge — 1926.1052(c)(1). Four risers is a lower bar than people assume, and most temporary flights clear it.
- Stairrails installed after March 1991 are at least 36 inches from the tread surface.
- Treads and risers uniform within a flight. The one odd-height step is what catches people, because your foot goes where the last four told it to.

TEMPORARY STAIRS

- No pan stairs until the pans are filled. Metal pan treads left unfilled, or filled with loose gravel and a scrap of ply, are a trap — the surface moves under you and there is nothing to grab.
- Nothing stored on a stair or a landing. Not for a minute. A stair is an escape route as well as a route to work.
- Landings kept clear and drained, and lit well enough to see the nosing.
- Handrails complete before the flight is used, not after the inspection.

RAMPS AND RUNWAYS

- Uniform, slip-resistant surface, cleated where it is steep or wet.
- Guardrails on runways four feet or more above a lower level.
- Watch the bounce. A ramp or plank that flexes noticeably under one person is not carrying two people and a load. Report it rather than walking it gently.
- Never use a ramp built for wheelbarrows as a walkway for materials on a shoulder.

THE HABITS

- One hand on the rail, always. Which means you do not carry it in both hands — hoist it, cart it, or make two trips.
- See the step. Carrying anything that blocks your view of your feet on stairs is how ankles and wrists go.
- Look at the surface, not the phone. Nothing on a screen is worth a flight of stairs.
- Clean your boots. Mud and ice come with you onto a nosing that is already smooth.
- Report the loose nosing, the missing rail, the light that has gone. Everyone walks past it; the next person is carrying something.

ASK THE CREW

- Are there any temporary stairs on this site without a complete handrail?
- Are any pan stairs still unfilled?
- What is stored on a landing right now?

29 CFR 1926.1051 · 29 CFR 1926.1052 · 29 CFR 1910.22

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Stairs, Ramps and Runways

About 8 minutes to deliver · 29 CFR 1926.1051 · 29 CFR 1926.1052 · 29 CFR 1910.22

DateJob / site

Delivered byCompany

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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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