

**CTC Meeting #27  
JUNE 17 – 18, 2013  
Climbable Guards**

The following 2013 Group B changes have been compiled for the above noted CTC Area of Study. Code changes with an (\*) indicate CTC sponsored code changes. These changes are intended to serve as the agenda for the CTC in order to establish CTC public comments, if any, for the upcoming 2013 Group B Final Action Hearings. THIS REPORT ONLY INCLUDES THOSE CODE CHANGES FOR WHICH CTC HAS TAKEN A POSITION ON A CODE CHANGE.

**RB145-13**

Study group recommendation: None. No SG call.

Staff note: This is the code change that deletes "fixed seating" as it relates to a walking surface adjacent to a deck guard. The same deletion occurred in the 09/10 cycle such that "fixed seating" is not in the 2012 IBC.

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**RB145 – 13  
CAH ACTION: AS**

**Proponent:** Rick Davidson, City of Maple Grove, Association of Minnesota Building Officials (rdavidson@maplegrovern.gov); Steve Thomas, Colorado Code Consulting, LLC representing the Colorado Chapter ICC (sthomas@coloradocode.net)

**Revise as follows:**

**R312.1.2 Height.** Required *guards* at open-sided walking surfaces, including stairs, porches, balconies or landings, shall be not less than 36 inches (914 mm) high measured vertically above the adjacent walking surface, ~~adjacent fixed seating~~ or the line connecting the leading edges of the treads.

**Exceptions:**

1. *Guards* on the open sides of stairs shall have a height not less than 34 inches (864 mm) measured vertically from a line connecting the leading edges of the treads.
2. Where the top of the *guard* also serves as a handrail on the open sides of stairs, the top of the *guard* shall not be less than 34 inches (864 mm) and not more than 38 inches (965 mm) measured vertically from a line connecting the leading edges of the treads.

**Reasons:**

**Davidson:** This proposal deletes the term "adjacent fixed seating" from the rules on guards. The term "fixed seating" is not defined. This makes the intent ambiguous and unclear. This will result in a lack of uniformity. There is no evidence to suggest that this rule serves any purpose or that it corrects any problems. There was never any evidence submitted that there is a problem.

The intent of the current language could result in guards being five or six feet in height. Designing a guard to meet the load requirements at the top of such a guard will result in significant attachment concerns because the current load requirements were based on the assumption that the guard would only be 36 inches high and the code requires that the design load for guards be at the top. This code requirement is unreasonable because compliance with the rule will be extremely expensive yet provide little increase in safety over the previous rules.

Furthermore, it penalizes designs using fixed seating all the while ignoring chairs and other furniture than can be easily pushed next to a guard creating the same potential circumstances. If we really wanted to address a safety hazard, we would require self closing gates be installed across all stairways to prevent children from falling down stairs which is a much more frequent occurrence.

To avoid expensive and unintended design costs and to avoid confusion and a lack of uniformity of enforcement, this term must be deleted. It is reasonable to delete the term because the current language in the code has not been shown to cause unsafe conditions.

**Thomas:** This change is to delete the requirement to extend a guard 36 inches above the surface of fixed seating. The same requirement was deleted out of the 2012 IBC. Subsequent attempts to put it back in the 2015 IBC failed in Portland. This proposal will make the two codes consistent with each other in this area.

The original requirement was lumped in a larger change that was made to the guard provisions in the code. There was no technical justification to raise the height of the guard at the back of fixed seating. There was also no definition of what fixed seating is. This should never have been put in the IRC in the first place.

We feel that this requirement is over-restrictive. The responsibility of keeping children from climbing on the back of a deck bench or some type of landscape wall should not be placed on the code. At some point, parents need to be responsible for their children. Raising the height of the bench back rest to a height of 54 inches above the deck will not prevent children from climbing over and falling.

**Cost Impacts :**

**Davidson:** None

**Thomas:** This will reduce the cost of construction.

**RB145-13**

Public Hearing:	Committee:	AS	AM	D
	Assembly:	ASF	AMF	DF

R31.1.2-RB-DAVIDSON-THOMAS

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**RB145-13**

**Committee Action:**

**Approved as Submitted**

**Committee Reason:** The committee approved this proposed code change because they felt that children cannot be prevented from moving many other objects and climbing on these as well. Parents must monitor children.

**Assembly Action:**

**None**

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