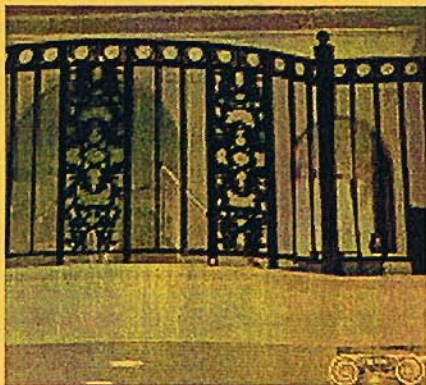


RB46-00
IRC Committee Voted
Approval as Submitted
in Birmingham, AL

We ask that you vote with the committee
√ Vote AS

- The IRC Building Energy Committee approved RB46-00 as submitted because it is “Consistent with IBC.”
- The comments for disapproval ask the rhetorical question, “Does the climbability of a guard result in an unsafe condition in areas where small children are present.” Based on data collected and presented in the monograph, the answer is an emphatic “no.” **In fact, for 1999, there were zero injuries reported by the Consumer Product Safety Commission for children under the age of six related to jumps from balconies where a significant fall or injury was involved.**

- The published public comment states, “It is important to note that just because something in the code is interpretive, it doesn’t mean that it should be taken out of the code.” However, interpretation is an issue. The guard shown at the right was the subject of a lawsuit against a metal fabricator in New Jersey. The homeowner made a conscious decision to use the decorative baluster collar as a foothold as he climbed up the railing to change a light bulb. Upon falling off the railing, he was impaled on the bushes below. A suit was filed against the fabricator claiming the guard did not meet the local building code requirements in that the decorative collar had provided a *ladder effect*.



- A local New Jersey inspector rejected the railing design to the left. The ornamental pattern was interpreted as providing a *ladder effect*. The owner was required to cover the design with a Plexiglas sheet to pass inspection. Even though the openings are not more than 1-1/2 inches and would meet the requirements of the pool barrier requirements shown in the “IRC Appendix G105, Barrier Requirements”. Would you, as a building official, have the same interpretation?

Vote “Approval as submitted” for RB46-00



Removing Artistic Design from the American home.

The photo to the left depicts a 30-inch high entry rise. The risers are 6 inches and the treads are 12 inches. The guardrail is 42 inches high and the handrails are set at 35 inches centerline from the walking surface and the front edge of the stair treads. Approval as submitted of E14-00 item 2 along with approval of RB40-00 will require this type of guard and handrail for the front entry of a one or two family home with a 30-inch high front entry stoop or porch. Besides being overly restrictive. The sterile look would ruin the visual appeal of any country, colonial or cottage style home.

ICC Definitions

IRC 2000 Section R202 Definitions
IBC 2000 Section 1002.1 Definitions

GUARD: "A building component or a system of building components located near the open sides of elevated walking surfaces that minimizes the possibility of a fall from the walking surface to the lower level."

HANDRAIL: "A horizontal or sloping rail intended for grasping by the hand for guidance or support."

Still Comparing Apples to Bananas!

A constant misconception keeps coming up. People continue to compare pool barriers to guards. We understand the attraction there is to climbing a pool fence – you get to swim. However, what is the attraction for someone to climb over a guard when the only thing on the other side is a drop. The monograph notes test results using the "visual cliff" apparatus that prove that depth perception in children exists from the age of 8 months. Children do perceive depth and will avoid sudden drops in height.

Common Guard Locations

When you step back and look at the most common setting in which a guard is installed in a residential application (like the one to the right). It's hard to imagine an exterior deck without patio furniture, planters, or other decorative items that enhance the deck's use and are much more likely to be climbed than the guard. The National Safe Kids campaign (www.safekids.org) states that the majority of falls involving children "... occur from furniture, stairs, baby walkers, playground equipment, windows and shopping carts."

