

OPENING IN GUARDS / DESIGN TO PREVENT CLIMBING

ONTARIO BUILDING CODE

9.8.8.6. Guards Designed Not to Facilitate Climbing

- (1) Guards required by Article 9.8.8.1., except those in industrial occupancies and where it can be shown that the location and size of openings do not represent a hazard, shall be designed so that no member, attachment or opening located between 140mm and 900 mm above the floor or walking surface protected by the guard will facilitate climbing.

3.3.1.17. Guards

- (5) Unless it can be shown that the location and size of openings do not present a hazard, a guard shall be designed so that no member, attachment or opening located between 140mm and 900mm above the level protected by the guard will facilitate climbing.

OBJECTIVE

The main intent for providing guards in dwelling units is to prevent accidental falls from one level to another and therefore guards must be built to withstand the loading specified in the building code Table 9.8.8.2. In addition, guards constructed with standard balusters must be spaced not more than 100mm on centre in order to prevent children from getting their heads stuck between them.

When guards are constructed with attachments or decorative elements that will facilitate climbing such as horizontal members or near horizontal members, they must be attached so that they will not achieve a ladder affect tempting children to climb over these guards and expose them to the risk of falling over.

The diagrams to the right are based on an opinion received from the National Research Council Canada. Their diagrams suggest that horizontal members that are greater than 450mm in height will not facilitate climbing and therefore do not provide a ladder affect. These diagrams can be used as a guide in obtaining Building Code compliance.

Alternatively, where decorative elements are contained within the guard that would be considered making the guard climbable or openings exceeding the maximum permitted, the decorative elements may be covered with safety glass only and permanently fixed or attached to the guard.

