

Installing external handrails

Client Information - Occupational Therapy

When installing

1. Make sure the handrail can be securely fixed into position and consider the surface it will be fixed to (e.g. brick, weatherboard, standard wallboard, tiles and laminate).
2. That the handrail design is able to take the full weight of the person and that the surface of the handrail is not slippery.
3. Handrails should have rounded edges, with an outside dimension (OD) between 32-50mm.
4. Handrails can be fitted to the right side, left side or both sides of the steps and should be continuous around the landings.
5. For the threshold step a rail fixed to the door frame may be beneficial
6. Fix the handrail so there is no obstruction of the hand along the length of the rail.
7. Handrails should extend 300mm beyond entry and exit of the steps. This is to enable the person a safe entry/exit to and from the steps. However, if space is limited then consider finishing the rail in line with the edge of the bottom step.
8. The height of the handrail from floor up should be between 850 and 950mm, depending on the height of the person.
9. The handrails need to be spaced from the posts or wall to ensure that under normal use, the person's hand will not contact the post/wall or other obstructions. This is not to be any less than 50mm at the sides and 100mm above.
10. Generally the material used for external rails is galvanised piping.

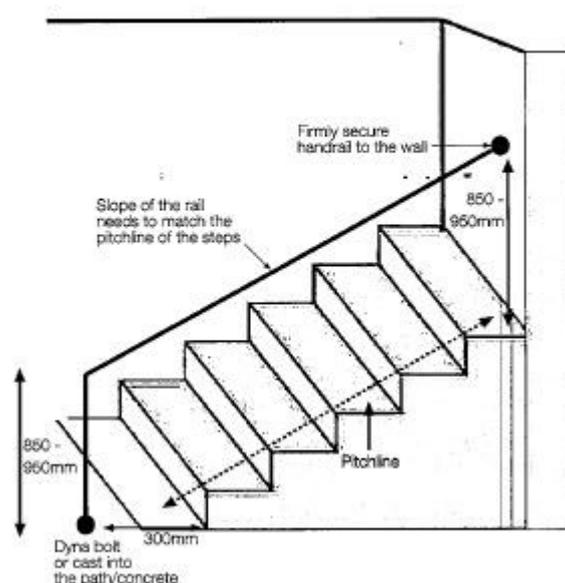


Figure 1: Floor to wall mounted rail

Refer to Figures 1, 2 and 3.

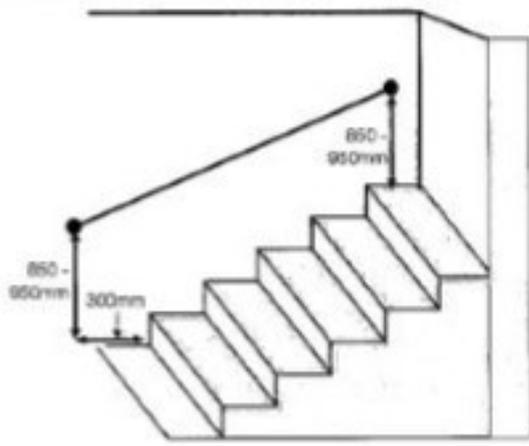


Figure 2: Wall mounted rail

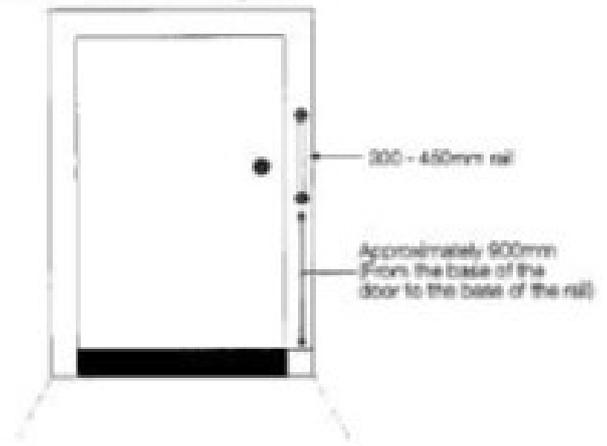


Figure 3: Threshold step rail

References

- Goldsmith, S. (1976). *Designing for the Disabled (3rd ed.)*. London, England: RIBA Publications
- Enable New Zealand. (2006). *Housing Modification Manual*. Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- Hunter, R. (1992). *More Accessible Housing for Independent Living*. Victoria, Australia: City of Sale.
- Website: Ministry of Health Disability Support Services <http://disabilityservices.hiirc.org.nz/>

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Disclaimer

The enclosed information is to be used as a guide only. Canterbury DHB and the authors accept no responsibility for decisions made, work carried out or losses suffered (by anyone) in reliance upon this information. If you have any doubts about fitting rails, please consult a builder.

If you have any questions about the information in this booklet, please contact the occupational therapist who gave this to you.

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- your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz
- hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz