SECTION R312
GUARDS

R312.1 Where required. *Guards* shall be located along open-sided walking surfaces, including stairs, ramps and landings, that are located more than 30 inches (762 mm) measured vertically to the floor or *grade* below at any point within 36 inches (914 mm) horizontally to the edge of the open side. Insect screening shall not be considered as a *guard.*

R312.2 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 side of the stairs, the top of the *guard* shall not be not less than 34 inches (864 mm) and more than 38 inches (965 mm) measured vertically from a line connecting the leading edges of the treads.
> 3. Where the *guard* serves adjacent fixed seating in a barrier island setting located above natural sand dunes, the top of the *guard* shall be not less than 36 inches (914 mm) high measured vertically above the extension of the adjacent walking surface located directly beneath the fixed seating area.

R312.3 Opening limitations. Required *guards* shall not have openings from the walking surface to the required *guard* height which allows passage of a sphere 4 inches (102 mm) in diameter.

> **Exceptions:**
> 1. The triangular openings at the open side of a stair, formed by the riser, tread and bottom rail of a *guard*, shall not allow passage of a sphere 6 inches (153 mm) in diameter.
> 2. *Guards* on the open sides of stairs shall not have openings which allow passage of a sphere 4 3/8 inches (111 mm) in diameter.

R312.4 Exterior woodplastic composite guards. Woodplastic composite *guards* shall comply with the provisions of Section R317.4.