Southwest
New Brunswick
Service Commission

Handrails

Part of finishing in a home usually involves adding the little details like lighting figures, guards, and handrails. There are some simple rules regarding handrails. There are some exceptions for larger commercial buildings, or for handicapped ramps - contact our inspectors for guidance in these cases.

Height of handrails:

Handrail height is measured from a diagonal line at the tips of stair treads. (Our inspectors will often use a board that spans two risers - you can too.) Height from the ***top*** of the handrail must be

1. between 86.5 and 107 cm (34" to 42"). (Changed in NBC 2015).
2. No more than 107 cm if part of a guard. [9.8.7.2 (a) and (b) and 9.8.7.2(3).]

Fastening of handrails:

Handrails must be supported at least every 1.2 metres (4 feet) with screws that bear into framing or blocking to a depth of at least 32 mm (1 1/4"). The first attachment point at either end must be no further than 30 cm (12") from the end. [9.8.7.7(2)(c) and (b)].

Design of handrails:

A clearance of not less than 50 mm shall be provided between a handrail and any surface behind it.
Except for single-family dwellings, all handrails shall be constructed so as to be **continually graspable along their entire length** with no obstruction on or above them to break a handhold. (Note: under NBC 2015, the handrail , the handrail cannot be interrupted by newel posts: 9.8.7.2)