



Industry Advisory from the Building & Safety Department

Balconies/Guardrails

February 1, 2016

Please be advised that effective **February 1, 2016**, our Department began enforcing the dimensions as indicated for fall protection on balconies more than 30 inches above grade. In the 2012 IRC section "R312.1.2 Height – "Required guards at open-sided walking surfaces, including stairs, porches, balconies or landings, shall not be less than 36 inches high measured vertically above the adjacent walking surface, adjacent fixed seating or the line connecting the leading edges of the treads".

The term fixed seating is not defined. This makes the intent ambiguous and unclear.

This department policy is to define the seat dimension as 2.5 inches or more measured from the inside face of the wall to the guard. A guard installed more than 2.5 inches from the inside face of the wall shall extend 36 inches above the top of the wall. A guard installed no more than 2.5 inches from the face of the wall shall be no less than 36 inches measured from the floor or deck.

The intent is to prevent small children from climbing on top of the seat and falling over the guard. The lack of clear code provision on the manner that these guards have been commonly constructed with a combination of block or masonry wall and decorative iron or other railing in our City has led to the need for this interpretation.

An illustration of this interpretation is provided below for your information.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact Christopher Knight at 702-229-6093 or Michael Bouse at 702-229-4883.

