NATIONAL TERRAZZO &
MOSAIC ASSOCIATION

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Building Code Requirements for Stair Treads

Overview: The International Building Code (IBC) establishes minimum requirements for building systems using prescriptive and performance-related provisions. This building code is updated every three years, then each state and municipality adopt the code with implementation of that state's statutes.

Caveats: A state, city, or county may establish more restrictive standards because of local climatic or geological conditions. In many cases, related provisions from various chapters must be considered simultaneously or reconsidered later in the process to arrive at a correct classification or determination. The following notes are based on the 2018 International Building Code Stairways (Chapter 10- Section 1011). Note: There are exceptions and more explicit language in the code.

Treads and Risers shall comply with Sections 1011.5.1 through 1011.5.5.3. Riser height shall be 7 inches maximum-4 inches minimum. Tread depth shall be 11 inches minimum. Nosing shall have a curvature or bevel of not less than 1/16 inch but not more than 9/16 inch from the foremost projection of the adjacent treads. The leading edge (nosings) of treads shall project not more than 1 · inch beyond the tread below.

Stairway walking surface: shall comply with Section 1011.7 and Section 1003.4. Circulation paths of the means of egress shall have a slip-resistant surface and securely attached. Treads Not be sloped steeper than one unit vertical in 48 units horizontal (2 % slope) in any direction.

NTMA Interpretations: While many designers require and are in their right to require abrasive strips on the treads, the IBC makes no reference to a requirement for these abrasive strips. If strips are desired, aluminide oxide strips are generally preferred over metal strips for cost and in-service use. Stainless Steel strips are set in grooves filled with epoxy resin. Stainless steel typically does not bond as well to epoxy as aluminum oxide.