
Barriers, Covers, and Guardrails Policy

Applicable Legislation:

O. Reg. 851, R.R.O. 1990, Industrial Establishments, Sections 13, 14, 15, 20

O. Reg. 213/91, Construction Projects, Sections 85, 86

O. Reg. 145/00, Regulation to Amend O.Reg. 213/91

Relevant Standard:

Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 419/86)

Intent:

To promote the use and maintenance of barriers, covers, and guardrails for workplace safety.

Requirements of O. Reg. 851, Industrial Establishments, Sections 13, 14, 15, 20

13.(1) Subject to subsection (2), there shall be a guardrail,

- a. around the perimeter of an uncovered opening in a floor, roof or other surface to which a worker has access;*
- b. at an open side of;*
 - i. a raised floor, mezzanine, balcony, gallery, landing platforms, walkway, stile, ramp or other surface, or*
 - ii. a vat, bin or tank, the top of which is less than 107 centimetres above the surrounding floor, ground, platform or other surfaces; and*
- c. around a machine, electrical installation, place or thing that is likely to endanger the safety of any worker.*

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply to,

- a. a loading dock;*
- b. a roof to which access is required only for maintenance purposes; and*
- c. a pit used for,*
 - a. work on an assembly line, or*
 - b. maintenance of vehicles or similar equipment.*

14.(1) A guardrail shall;

- a. have a top rail located not less than 91 and not more than 107 centimetres above the surface to be guarded;*
- b. have a mid-rail;*
- c. if tools or other objects may fall on a worker, have a toe board that extends from the surface to be guarded to a height of at least 125 millimetres; and*
- d. be free of splinters and protruding nails.*

(2) A guardrail shall be constructed to meet the structural requirements for guards as set out in the Building Code.

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15. A cover on an opening in a floor, roof or other surface shall be,

- a. secured in place; and
- b. constructed to meet the structural requirements for loads due to the use of floors and roofs as set out in the Building Code.

20. Barriers, warning signs or other safeguards for the protection of all workers in an area shall be used where vehicle or pedestrian traffic may endanger the safety of any worker.

Policy:

1. At workplaces with multiple trades activity, the project supervisor shall assign responsibility for erecting and inspecting barriers, covers, guardrails, and safety notices.
2. Barriers, covers, and guardrails shall be inspected for safety before commencing work assignments.
3. Barriers and guardrails shall be capable of resisting any load (force) likely to be applied.
4. Barriers or guardrails shall be erected at any transition or opening large enough to create a fall hazard (i.e. heights greater than 0.6 metres).
5. Barriers, guardrails, and covers that have been removed temporarily shall be replaced before leaving the job-site.
6. Barriers, covers, and guardrails shall be coloured to be highly visible.

Guidelines:

Guardrails are commonly used to protect people and equipment and may be temporary or permanent fixtures. They prevent falls from rooftops, scaffolds, balconies, mezzanines, and work platforms, and prevent falls into floor openings, pits, tanks, and vats. They are installed to prevent falls around stairways and landings and around machinery and other workplace hazards. The height of a guardrail that prevents falls from a level surface is 1.07 metres. The guardrail should have a mid-rail and a toe board 12.5 cm high. Vertical supports are spaced every 2.4 metres. Stairway guardrails are positioned at 85 cm and are supported vertically every 2.4 metres. Building codes will prescribe specifications for permanent guardrails.

For further information about guardrails, see the *Construction Health and Safety Manual* published by the Construction Safety Association of Ontario, ISBN 0-919465-54-4.

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