

## CHAPTER 10 MEANS OF EGRESS

### SECTION 1013.3 2006 Edition IBC Interpretation No. 45-08 Issued 12-30-2008 BU\_06\_45\_08

**1013.3 Opening limitations.** Open guards shall have balusters or ornamental patterns such that a 4-inch-diameter (102 mm) sphere cannot pass through any opening up to a height of 34 inches (864 mm). From a height of 34 inches (864 mm) to 42 inches (1067 mm) above the adjacent walking surfaces, a sphere 8 inches (203 mm) in diameter shall not pass.

#### Exceptions:

1. The triangular openings formed by the riser, tread and bottom rail at the open side of a stairway shall be of a maximum size such that a sphere of 6 inches (152 mm) in diameter cannot pass through the opening.
2. At elevated walking surfaces for access to and use of electrical, mechanical or plumbing systems or equipment, guards shall have balusters or be of solid materials such that a sphere with a diameter of 21 inches (533 mm) cannot pass through any opening.
3. In areas that are not open to the public within occupancies in Group I-3, F, H or S, balusters, horizontal intermediate rails or other construction shall not permit a sphere with a diameter of 21 inches (533 mm) to pass through any opening.
4. In assembly seating areas, guards at the end of aisles where they terminate at a fascia of boxes, balconies and galleries shall have balusters or ornamental patterns such that a 4-inch-diameter (102 mm) sphere cannot pass through any opening up to a height of 26 inches (660 mm). From a height of 26 inches (660 mm) to 42 inches (1067 mm) above the adjacent walking surfaces, a sphere 8 inches (203 mm) in diameter shall not pass.
5. Within individual dwelling units and sleeping units in Group R-2 and R-3 occupancies, openings for required guards on the sides of stair treads shall not allow a sphere of 4.375 inches (111 mm) to pass through.



**Q:** In accordance with the provisions of Section 1013.3 of the *International Building Code*, is an open guard utilizing an ornamental pattern that will prevent the passage of a 4-inch diameter sphere through the guard required to be designed such that the ornamental pattern will not create a ladder effect?

**A:** No. The provisions in Section 1013.3 permit a guard to be constructed utilizing any ornamental pattern and makes no reference to "ladder effect." With regards to the opening limitations, a guard can be designed with any ornamental pattern that will prevent a 4-inch diameter sphere from passing through the guard.