



BUILDINGS BULLETIN 2011-017

Technical

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Issuer: Thomas Fariello, RA
Acting First Deputy Commissioner

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Purpose: This document clarifies the loading requirements for the design of balcony railing components.

Related Code/Zoning Section(s):
BC 1607.7.1.2
AC 27-558

Subject(s): Balcony, railing, loading requirements; Balcony, balusters, loading requirements; Balcony, panel fillers, loading requirements

Background. Components of balcony railings that can be easily detached or moved out of intended original position present potential safety hazards. It is the purpose of this bulletin to clarify loading requirements for railings in both the 1968 Code and the 2008 Code to prevent such hazards.

Specifics.

Section 27-558 of the 1968 Code establishes loading requirements for intermediate and bottom rails. The Department interprets the vertical force specified in such section to include a vertical upward force of 50 pounds applied at the most critical location.

Similarly, section BC 1607.7.1.2 of the 2008 Code establishes the horizontal loading requirements for intermediate rails, balusters and panel fillers. For vertical loading requirements, the following shall apply:

1. a vertically downward load of 50 pounds per linear foot, and
2. a concentrated upward force of 50 pounds, applied at the most critical position

The railings, balusters and components shall be designed separately for the effect of wind when the total wind load on the panel or component exceeds 50 pounds. The wind load need not be combined with any other live load.