

FALLS BETWEEN LEVELS

Falls from windows, balconies or even from raised decking can result in serious injury, especially for children aged under five or people over 60.

This hazard is distinct from staircase falls and instead covers falls directly from one level to another where the drop is greater than 300mm. This can also include falls from landings in the home, into outside basement wells and from garden retaining walls etc. onto a lower level.

Some points to consider

- Think about the tenant who will live in the property and any potential vulnerabilities in the layout both internally and externally that could lead to a fall.
- Horizontal spindles on balustrading can be climbed too easily and need to be avoided.
- Watch out for dangerous unprotected drops into lightwells from basements etc.
- Remember drops from unguarded steps and even garden decking can cause injury so consideration is needed for any external landscaping.



DASH Services offers landlord members a reliable signposting service to help navigate their way around an ever changing market place. Can we help you?



For more advice,
visit our website at
dashservices.org.uk

Who is at risk?

Children under five years old statistically carry the most risk as they are likely to explore without the knowledge of how hazardous a fall might be. Older people over 60 are a lesser risk but falls in this age group often result in more severe health outcomes.

Indoor hazards

Windows that are easy to open, particularly above ground level are a clear hazard for children. Window restrictors can provide an effective solution but should be easy to override by an adult in the event of a fire.



An example of an inadequate window restrictor with key which should not be used.

Young children are naturally curious and exploring their surroundings is a key part of their development. A restrictor allows them to do this more safely.

Restrictors conforming to British Standard BS 6375 Part 2 should only allow the window to be opened to a maximum of 100mm and also be strong enough to withstand an adult falling onto the window without opening fully.

Outside hazards

Our inspectors have come across a number of examples over the years where fall hazards are sometimes obvious, but sometimes not.



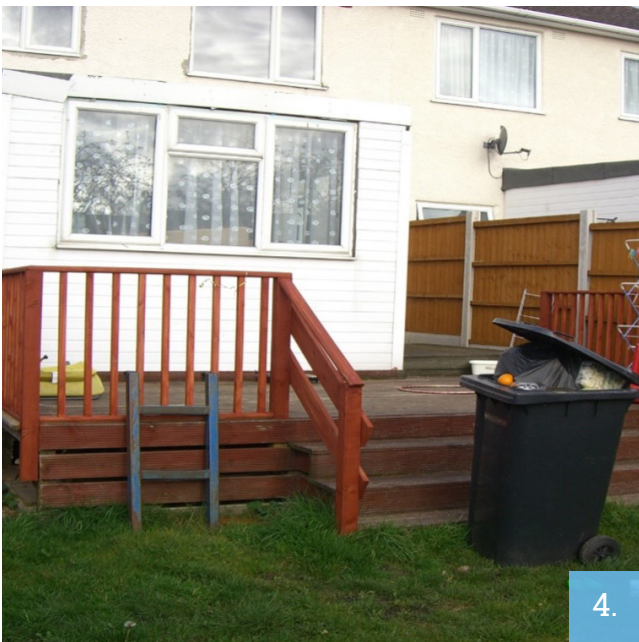
The image above shows an example of adequate balustrading on the left hand side and inadequate balustrading on the right hand side.

Balustrading should be of a vertical design rather than horizontal as shown on the right with gaps which are too large.

Further examples of fall hazards



Although this image above shows a much smaller drop in level, the risk of a fall without adequate balustrading remains and could still be significant. Walking straight off this decking in the dark could lead to a broken ankle or worse.



This image shows a safer environment for tenants with adequate balustrading all around to help avoid falls to a lower level.



Here, there is adequate balustrading around steps and the raised patio. However, the fall hazard isn't in this area at all.

On inspection, it was found that the doors on the first floor of the house opened fully onto an unguarded balcony and a 2.5 metre drop to the paving below.

Child-proof window restrictors here would resolve the issue.

Remember to check outbuildings



On a first look there seems to be a reasonably limited scope for danger here at the back of this garage cut into a sloping back garden.

However, it is unlikely that the corrugated plastic sheet on the roof would stand the weight of a child and there is a drop of three metres to a concrete floor below.

Basement lightwells



Victorian basement lightwells such as this one are still relatively common, jutting out onto a front driveway.

This hazard could only be resolved by balustrading with a gate and ladder.

Further resources

DASH Services is a Private Rented Sector service for Local Authorities, Landlords & Tenants and is hosted by Derby City Council on behalf of a number of different Councils across England.

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The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

Falls directly from one level to another where the drop is greater than 300mm. It includes falls from balconies and landings.

Find out more at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

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