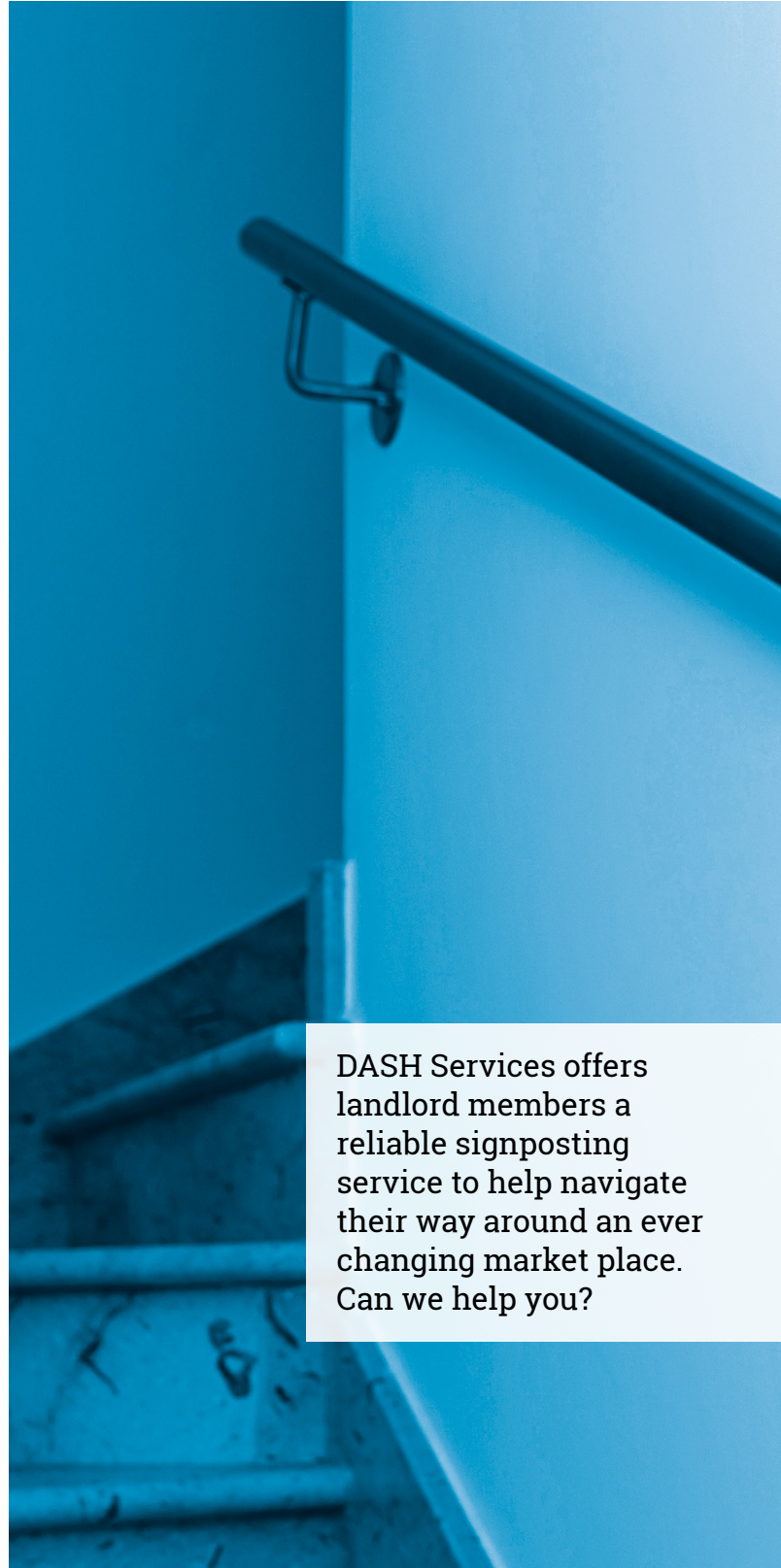


STAIRCASE SAFETY

Stairs account for a quarter of all falls in the home. Although falls on level ground are more common, a fall on the stairs is much more likely to result in a serious injury or may even be fatal.

There is a lot of statistical evidence that has been gathered over the years to pinpoint the causes of many of these falls. Here are some key findings to consider:

- Accidents are nearly twice as likely on straight stairs with no bends or intermediate landings due to the potential increase in distance of the possible fall.
- Particularly steep stairs also result in more accidents - a pitch of more than 42° is considered to be a hazard.
- The nosing of staircase treads – the portion of the tread that protrudes at the front – can increase missteps if they have poor friction quality or project more than 18mm from the riser.
- Falls on stairs are three times more likely on a staircase without a carpet covering.
- The lack of a handrail, even if there is a wall on either side, doubles the likelihood of a fall. The same risk level applies if there is no wall to at least one side of the staircase.



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

How can risks be minimised on staircases?

The ideal dimensions of a staircase should be:

- A width of at least 900mm so that a child and adult can use the stairs side-by-side
- Tread length should be between 280-360mm
- Riser height should be between 100-180mm
- Nosing length of less than 18mm

Whatever your measurement, these should be consistent for each stair as variations can also result in missteps occurring where a step is markedly narrower or higher/lower than the previous one.

Safe handrails

Safe handrails offer important assistance and can provide a vital hand-hold in the case of a slip often preventing a fall. Rails should be placed between 900-1000mm above the pitch line of the staircase or above floor level and the shape should be easy to grasp.

Adequate guarding

In the event of their being no wall on one or both sides of the stairs, adequate guarding such as a balustrade should be in place to prevent falls. These should be difficult for children to climb on and gaps in the guarding shouldn't allow a 100mm diameter sphere to pass through, preventing an accidental fall.

Adequate lighting

Adequate lighting, either natural or artificial, is required – particularly at the top and bottom of the staircase.

Carpeted staircases

A carpeted staircase generally provides a better grip than uncarpeted stairs and carpet on the floor at the bottom provides a softer landing in the event of a fall.



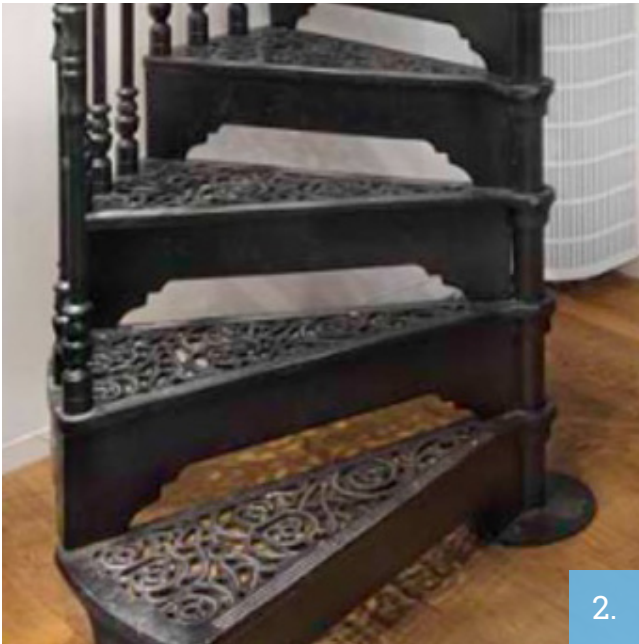
Reasonable space

There should be reasonable space at the top and bottom of any stairs, with no projections or sharp edges. It is not acceptable to have non-safety glass doors located near the foot of a flight of stairs.

Headroom allowance

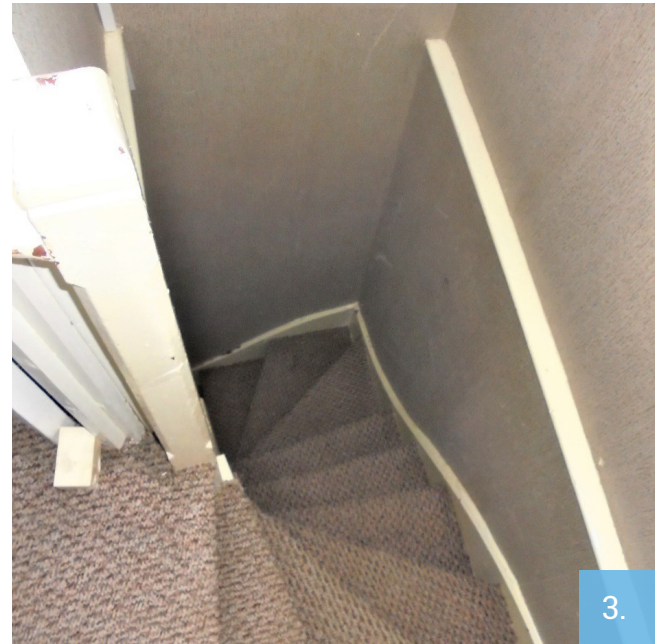
The headroom to the stairs themselves should be a minimum of 2000mm.

When is a staircase too dangerous for DASH Services approval?



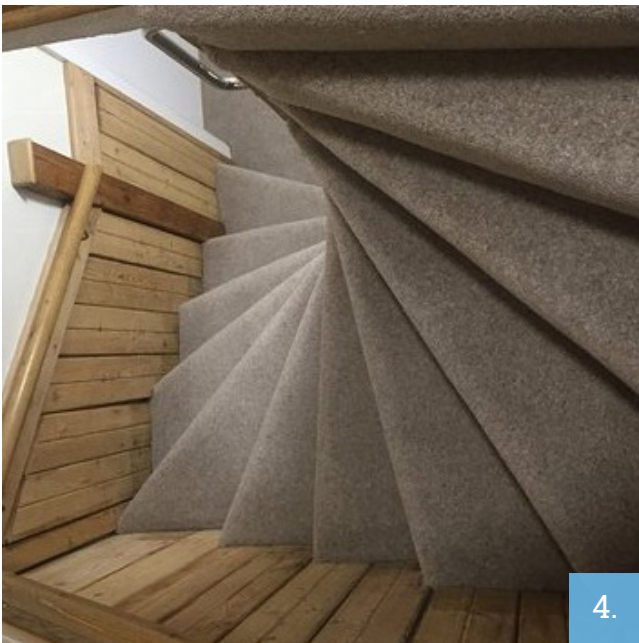
2.

A spiral staircase pivoting about a central column. Even the narrowest point of the tread has a few inches depth, such that if you miss step, the next step should catch you.



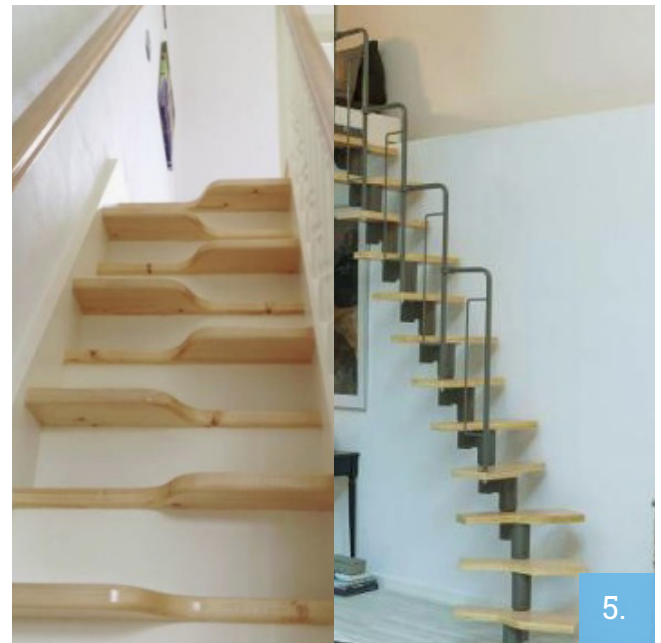
3.

The same staircase as above, but with the middle two steps running straight, such that a miss step at the top drops you about three steps before your foot might catch something.



4.

A staircase pivoting about one newel, with the narrowest point of the tread disappearing to a point. If you miss with your right foot on descent, there is nothing under it for most of the flight.



5.

Jack and Jill paddle staircases are widely not accepted in any homes.

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.

We will always try to ensure that all material on the site is as accurate and valid as we can make it. However, you should note that content is for general information only and we cannot guarantee that the information and advice given will always apply to a specific situation, or that the documents and forms provided will always be the most suitable for your particular situation.

The use you make of the information and services provided on site is your responsibility and we cannot accept liability for any problems resulting from your use of the DASH Services site.

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

Falls associated with stairs and ramps where the change in level is greater than 300mm. It includes internal stairs or ramps within a property, external steps or ramps associated with the property, access to the property and to shared facilities or means of escape from fire and falls over stairs, ramp or step guarding.

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

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