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Edition 3.2

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL STANDARD

The application of the National Building Regulations

Part M: Stairways

WARNING

This document references other documents normatively.

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Table of changes

Change No.	Date	Scope
Amdt 1	2018	Amended to delete the note to the scope, to move reference to a national body to the foreword, to update definitions and to renumber the definitions accordingly, to update the requirements for timber stairways, and to delete the annex on National Building Regulations – Part M: Stairways.
Amdt 2	2025	Amended to update the clause on requirements.

Foreword

This South African standard was prepared by National Committee SABS/TC 060, *Standards which address the National Building Regulations (NBRS)*, in accordance with procedures of the South African Bureau of Standards, in compliance with annex 3 of the WTO/TBT agreement.

This document was approved for publication in March 2025.

This document supersedes SANS 10400-M:2018 (edition 3.1).

A vertical line in the margin shows where the text has been technically modified by amendment No. 2.

This document is referenced in the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 1977 (Act No. 103 of 1977), the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002), and the National Land Transport Act, 2009 (Act No. 5 of 2009).

Compliance with the requirements of this document will be deemed to be compliance with the requirements of part M of the National Building Regulations, issued in terms of the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 1977 (Act No. 103 of 1977).

Compliance with this document cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

This document should be read in conjunction with SANS 10400-A.

Reference is made in 3.1 to the "relevant national body". In South Africa this means the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS). **Amdt 1**

SANS 10400 consists of the following parts, under the general title *The application of the National Building Regulations*:

Part A: General principles and requirements.

Part B: Structural design.

Part C: Dimensions.

Part D: Public safety.

Part F: Site operations.

Part G: Excavations.

Part H: Foundations.

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Foreword (concluded)

Part J: Floors.

Part K: Walls.

Part L: Roofs.

Part M: Stairways.

Part N: Glazing.

Part O: Lighting and ventilation.

Part P: Drainage.

Part Q: Non-water-borne means of sanitary disposal.

Part R: Stormwater disposal.

Part S: Facilities for persons with disabilities.

Part T: Fire protection.

Part V: Space heating.

Part W: Fire installation.

Part X: Environmental sustainability.

Part XA: Energy usage in buildings.

Annex A Deleted by amendment No. 1.

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Annex A Deleted by amendment No. 1.

The application of the National Building Regulations

Part M: Stairways

1 Scope

This part of SANS 10400 provides deemed-to-satisfy requirements for compliance with part M (Stairways) of the National Building Regulations.

NOTE Deleted by amendment No. 1.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies. Information on currently valid national and international standards can be obtained from the South African Bureau of Standards.

SANS 1460, *Laminated timber (glulam)*.

SANS 1783-2, *Sawn softwood timber – Part 2: Stress-graded structural timber and timber for frame wall construction*.

SANS 2001-CC1, *Construction works – Part CC1: Concrete works (structural)*.

SANS 2001-CC2, *Construction works – Part CC2: Concrete works (minor works)*.

SANS 2001-CM1, *Construction works – Part CM1: Masonry walling*.

SANS 10005, *The preservative treatment of timber*.

SANS 10400-A, *The application of the National Building Regulations – Part A: General principles and requirements*.

SANS 10400-B, *The application of the National Building Regulations – Part B: Structural design*.

SANS 10400-K, *The application of the National Building Regulations – Part K: Walls*.

SANS 10400-S, *The application of the National Building Regulations – Part S: Facilities for persons with disabilities*.

SANS 10400-T, *The application of the National Building Regulations – Part T: Fire protection*.

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3 Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the definitions given in SANS 10400-A (some of which are repeated for convenience) and the following apply.

3.1

accredited testing laboratory

laboratory that has been accredited by the relevant national body (see foreword)

Amdt 1

3.2

barrier

all walls, curtain walls, partitions, balustrade and all glazed areas, intended to prevent people from falling

Amdt 1

3.3

deemed-to-satisfy requirement

non-mandatory requirement, the compliance with which ensures compliance with a functional regulation

Amdt 1

3.4

emergency route

that part of an escape route which provides fire protection to the occupants of any building and which leads to an escape door

Amdt 1

3.5

escape door

door in an escape route which, at ground level, leads directly to a street or public place or to any approved open space which leads to a street or public place

Amdt 1

3.6

escape route

entire path of travel for all persons, including persons with disabilities, from the furthest point in any room in a building to the nearest escape door and may include an emergency route

Amdt 1

3.7

flight

that part of a stairway which consists of consecutive steps between landings

Amdt 1

3.8

functional regulation

regulation that sets out in qualitative terms what is required of a building or building element or building component in respect of a particular characteristic, without specifying the method of construction, dimensions or materials to be used

Amdt 1

3.9

going

distance (measured on plan) between the nosing of a tread and the nosing of the tread or landing immediately above it

Amdt 1

3.10

landing

platform between two consecutive flights of a stairway

Amdt 1

3.11

nosing

edge of a step projecting beyond the riser

Amdt 1

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3.12 person with disabilities person who has long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, might hinder his full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others	Amdt 1
3.13 pitch line notional line which connects the nosings of all the treads in a flight of stairs	Amdt 1
3.14 riser vertical distance between the tread of a step and the tread of the step immediately above it	Amdt 1
3.15 spiral stairway succession of tapered treads forming a curved stairway which extends as a single flight from one floor or landing to another	Amdt 1
3.16 stairway part of a building which provides a route of travel between different levels in such building and is formed by a single flight or by a combination of two or more flights and one or more intervening landings	Amdt 1
3.17 tapered tread tread which has a greater width at one side than at the other and a going which changes at a constant rate throughout its length	Amdt 1
3.18 tread upper surface of a step	Amdt 1
3.19 winder tapered tread that has a going of at least 50 mm and which is used in conjunction with non-tapered treads in a single flight	Amdt 1

4 Requirements

4.1 General

4.1.1 The functional regulations pertaining to stairways contained in part M of the National Building Regulations shall be deemed to be satisfied where **Amdt 1**

- a) the stairway, including any handrail to such stairway, is in accordance with the requirements of 4.2 and 4.3,
- b) the stairway complies with the requirements of
 - 1) SANS 10400-B and SANS 10400-T, or
 - 2) in the case of occupancies classified as H3 and H4 (see Regulation A20) in single-storey and double-storey buildings, 4.4 or 4.5, and **Amdt 2**
- c) any barrier to such stairway is in accordance with the requirements of either SANS 10400-B or SANS 10400-K and SANS 10400-T. **Amdt 1**

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4.1.2 Specific requirements for stairways in buildings in which facilities for persons with disabilities are provided, shall be in accordance with SANS 10400-S.

NOTE 1 SANS 10400-S reduces the rise of the step, increases the width of the stairway and the length of the landing, requires solid risers where stairs overlap the next lower tread, and requires handrails on both sides of the stairway.

NOTE 2 SANS 10400-T, in the case of emergency routes, increases the width of stairways, prohibits the use of spiral stairways, and requires solid risers on any occupancy class of building other than D4.

4.2 Dimensional requirements

4.2.1 The headroom at any point on any stairway shall be not less than 2,1 m, measured vertically from the pitch line, and the width of any stairway, measured to any enclosing wall or balustrade, shall be not less than 750 mm (see figure 1).

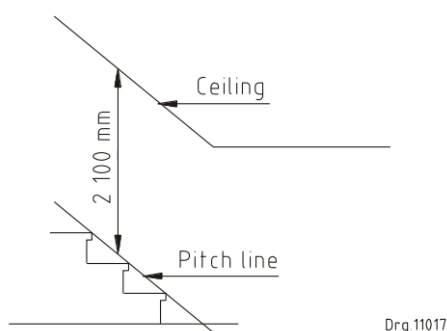


Figure 1 — Minimum permissible headroom on a stairway

4.2.2 Any landing serving two flights in the same straight line shall

- a) have a length of not less than 900 mm, and
- b) have a width of not less than that of such flights.

4.2.3 No flight of stairs shall have a vertical rise greater than 3 m between landings.

4.2.4 No door shall open onto a stairway unless such door opens onto a landing and the width of such landing is not less than that of such door. The position of the door relative to the landing and its direction of opening shall be such that it does not obstruct the flow of persons on the stairway when in the fully open position.

4.2.5 The rise of any step shall not exceed 200 mm.

4.2.6 The going and width of any tread shall be not less than 250 mm, provided that where the stairway does not have solid risers, each tread shall overlap the next lower tread by not less than 25 mm (see figure 2).

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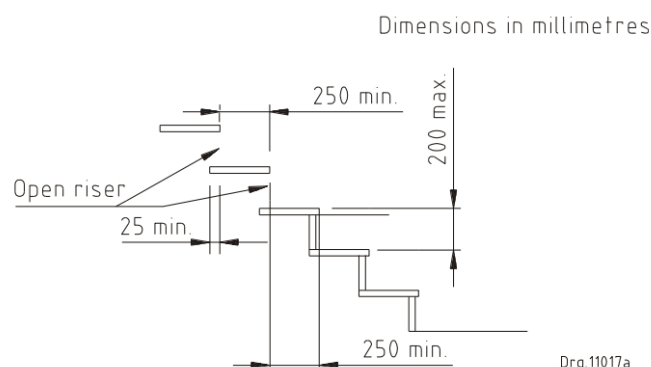


Figure 2 — Dimensions of treads and risers on a stairway

4.2.7 The variation in the dimensions of the risers and the goings of the treads in any one flight shall be not more than 6 mm, provided that this requirement shall not be construed as prohibiting the use of tapered treads in the same flight as non-tapered treads.

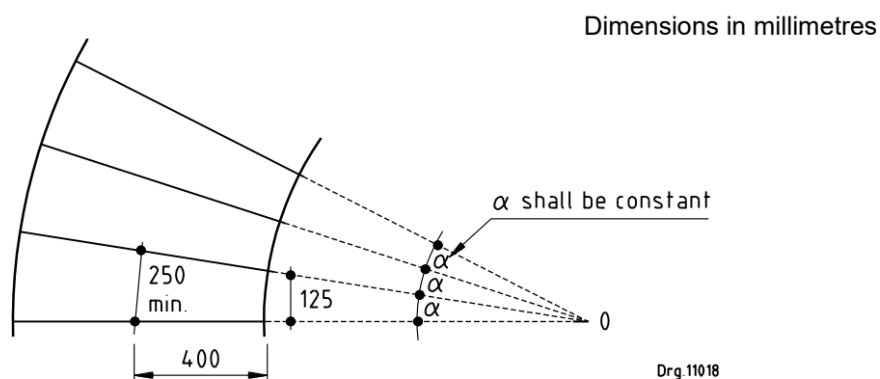
4.2.8 The dimension of each step of the stairway shall be such that the sum of the going and twice the riser is not less than 570 mm and not more than 650 mm.

4.2.9 Any tapered tread that is not a winder and that does not form part of a spiral stairway shall (see figure 3),

- a) be so designed that, in respect of that part of the tread which is 400 mm from the narrower end of such tread, the going
 - 1) complies with the requirement of 4.2.6, or
 - 2) equals, in the case of a flight containing both tapered and non-tapered treads, the going of the non-tapered treads,
- b) have a minimum going of 125 mm,
- c) be so constructed that the angle between successive risers, measured in the horizontal plane, is constant, and
- d) comply with the requirement of 4.2.7 for variation in goings, where such variation is, in each case, measured at the same distance from the narrower end of each tread.

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To check the variation in going between treads, measure each tread at the same distance from the narrower end.

Figure 3 — Measurement of tapered treads

4.2.10 Stairways incorporating winders shall be permitted only in dwelling houses and within individual dwelling units, and at any point on such stairway

- a) there shall be not more than three successive winders, and
- b) such winders shall not turn through more than 90° (see figure 4).

4.2.11 Any spiral stairway shall have a width of not more than 800 mm and such stairway shall not be used,

- a) as part of any emergency route,
- b) in any occupancy classified in terms of Regulation **A20** as A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, E1, E2, E3, E4, F1, G1, H1, H2 or H5.

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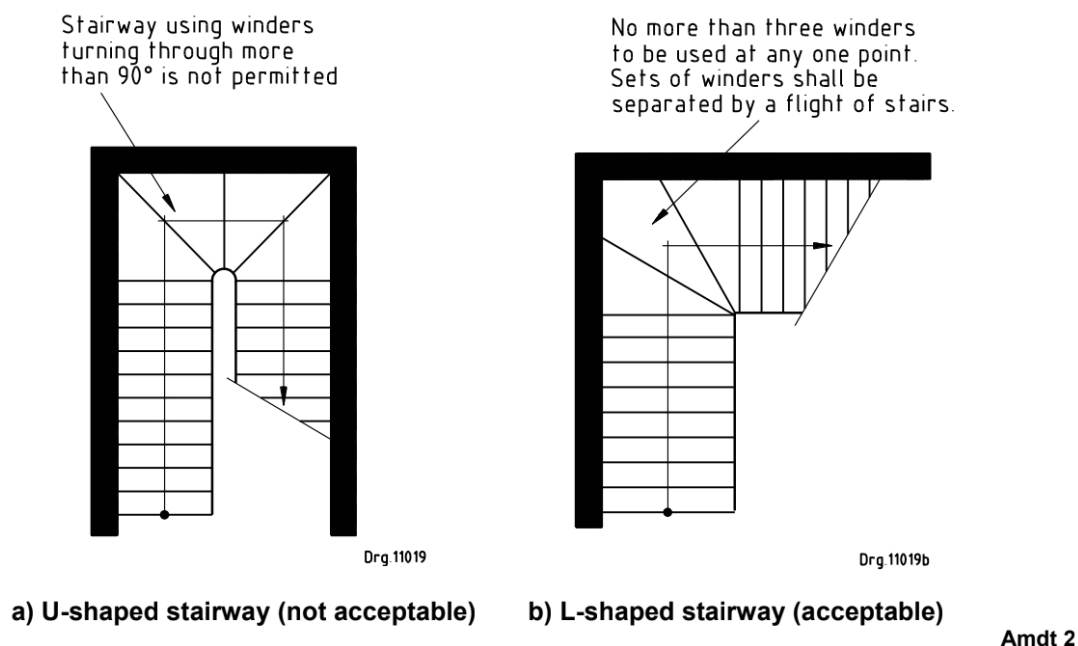


Figure 4 — Examples of winders

4.3 Prevention against falling

4.3.1 Any flight of steps which contains more than five risers shall have protection on both sides provided by a barrier in accordance with the requirements of SANS 10400-D (Public Safety).
Amdt 1; amdt 2

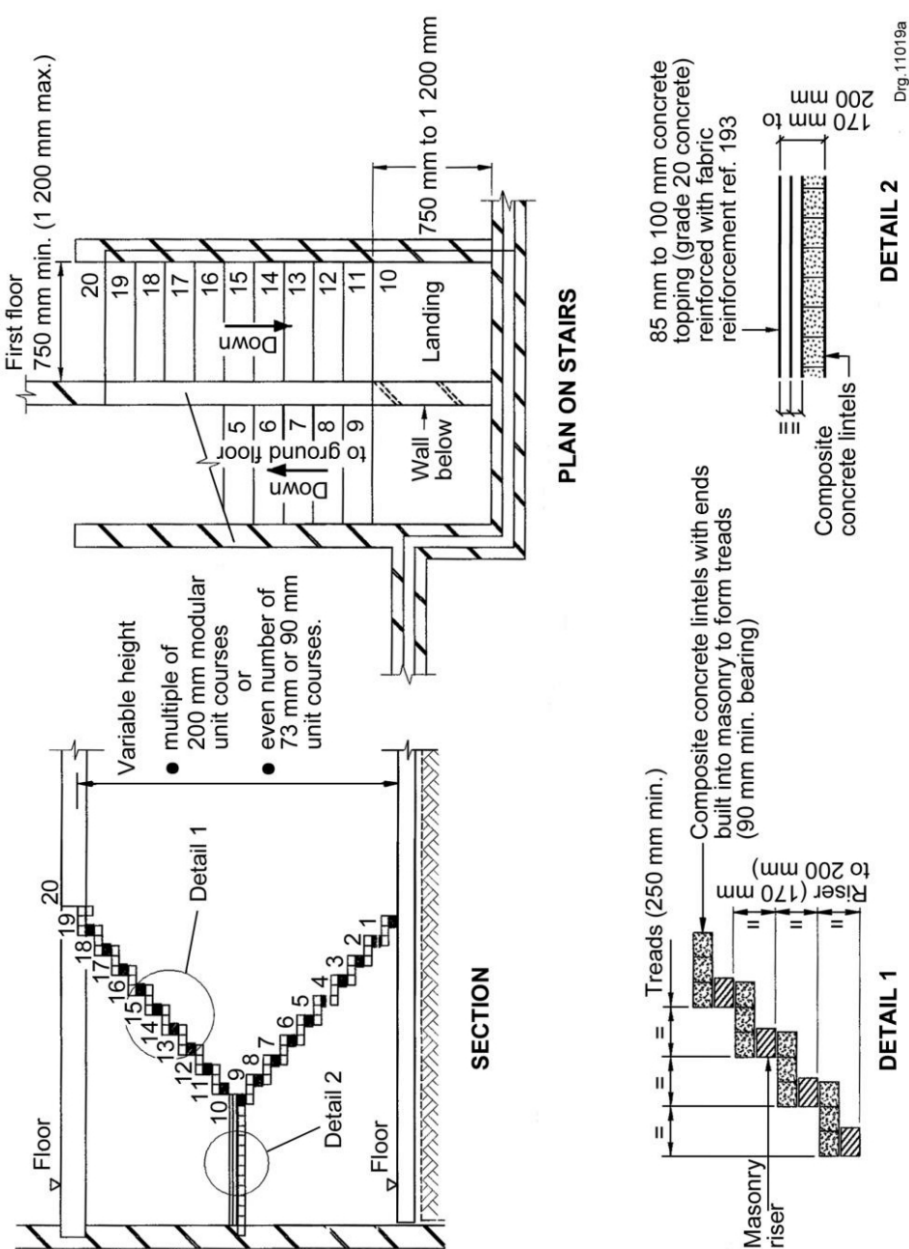
4.3.2 Any flight of stairs which contains more than three risers shall be provided with a continuous handrail extending the full length of such flight in accordance with the requirements of SANS 10400-S (Facilities for persons with disabilities). This requirement shall not apply to any building classified as H4, or within individual dwelling units in an occupancy classified as H3.
Amdt 2

4.3.3 Deleted by amendment No. 2.

4.4 Masonry stairways

Masonry stairways and landings in occupancies classified as H3 and H4 in single-storey and double-storey buildings shall be in accordance with the provisions of figure 5 and the relevant requirements of SANS 2001-CM1 and SANS 2001-CC1 or SANS 2001-CC2.

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NOTE The number of steps will vary.

Figure 5 — Composite concrete lintel and masonry stairway construction details

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4.5 Timber stairways

4.5.1 Timber stringer beams to support timber treads in stairway construction that does not exceed 1,2 m in width in occupancies classified as H3 and H4 in single-storey and double-storey buildings, shall be of minimum size 48 mm × 225 mm, of grade 5, comply with the requirements of SANS 1460 or SANS 1783-2, and be sufficiently free of warp in any direction to be fit for purpose.

4.5.2 Timber treads shall be a minimum of 36 mm thick. Timber treads may be built into masonry walls with a minimum end bearing of 90 mm, or be supported on a steel angle cleat that has minimum dimensions of 50 mm × 50 mm × 4 mm, and is bolted to a wall with two masonry anchors per cleat in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Such anchors, when embedded in grade 20 concrete, shall have a safe working load in shear of not less than 1,25 kN, certified by the manufacturer. Such certification shall be substantiated by test reports or certificates from recognized local or international accredited testing laboratories.

4.5.3 All timber (see regulation **A13(1)(b)**) used in timber stairways shall be preservative treated in accordance with SANS 10005, as relevant. **Amdt 1; amdt 2**

Annex A

Deleted by amendment No. 1.
