

Technical Guidance

Risers to private stairs - thick floor coverings



Question

Where thick floor coverings such as laminated flooring or tiles are laid in a hallway, can a tolerance for the floor finish be allowed in the height of first stair riser?

Considerations

- Unequal risers can create a trip hazard.
- Approved Document K (England & Wales), Scottish Building Standards Technical Handbook Domestic Section 4.3 and Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) Technical Handbook H, require all risers to be equal.
- NHBC Standards clauses 6.6 – D5(b) and 6.6 – S2(e) requires that all steps should have the same rise and that thickness of screeds and floor finishes should be taken into account.

Answer

The height of the first riser should be the same as the risers in the rest of the flight. The height should be measured from the structural floor finish i.e. the top of the cement screed or timber floor decking.

Where floor finishes of up to 12mm thick are installed, their effect on the height of the first riser may be ignored. However, where the builder installs a floor finish with a thickness greater than 12mm (e.g. thick laminate flooring or thick tiles) the stairs should be installed so that the height of the first riser, measured from the top of the floor finish, is equal to the risers in the rest of the flight.