

### Code Committee Rejects “Climbability” Restrictions

Children like to climb; no one disagrees with that. But when it comes to children climbing on the guards or rails surrounding decks, people do disagree about how to keep those kids safe. Three years ago, the Code Technology Committee (CTC) of the International Code Council (ICC) took on the issue, to determine if it needed to add measures to the International Residential Code (IRC) and International Building Code (IBC) to make guards harder to climb in order to prevent falls.

After holding 13 open meetings, and reviewing testimony and available research on guard-related injuries, the CTC has reported its conclusion that the evidence “shows no indication that a problem exists” and that no substantive code changes regarding guards’ “climbability” are necessary.

The committee has, however, recommended a change to the IRC in

the way the height of guards behind fixed seating is measured on decks that are over 30 inches high. At present, the guard behind built-in seating (often integrated as the back of the bench) may be the same height as the rest of the guard on the deck; that is, 36 inches above the surface of the deck. In the CTC’s code change E85-07/08, though, guards behind fixed seating must extend 36 inches above the seat itself.

Many jurisdictions already include this provision in their local code, according to Tom Zuzik of Artistic Railings in New Jersey. But in other parts of the country, deck builders who incorporate benches as part of the guard may need to adjust their designs to accommodate the additional height, if this change is instituted.

E85-07/08 also includes numerous editorial changes meant to improve clarity and make the language that

regulates guards consistent in the IBC and the IRC.

The IBC Means of Egress Committee and the IRC Building/Energy Committee have both approved E85-07/08. But it isn’t part of the 2009 IRC and IBC yet, as David Bowman, a codes manager at the ICC, explains: “There are several public comments challenging the committee actions on this code change proposal. So the fate of E85 will be determined at the Final Action Hearings. E85 is in two parts, which could split differently. If Part I succeeds, it becomes part of the IBC. If Part II succeeds, it will be included in the IRC.”

Final Action Hearings for the 2009 codes will be held in Minneapolis at the ICC Annual Conference in September. Download the CTC’s report and other documents about climbable guards from [iccsafe.org/cs/cc/ctc/climbable.html](http://iccsafe.org/cs/cc/ctc/climbable.html). — *Laurie Elden*

### Feeling the Heat

New work-site regulations passed by Washington’s Department of Labor and Industries require all employers in the state to protect outdoor employees from heat exposure. The rules went into effect on July 5 and will be enforced from May 1 through September 30 each year whenever outdoor temperatures exceed specified “action levels.”

These levels vary depending on personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing. For most deck builders, 89°F would trigger the rules — which have three main components: training, water, and emergency response.

Training must be offered annually and cover the causes and symptoms of heat-related illness as well as the procedures for employees to follow if they or another employee shows signs of heat stress.

For instance, factors that make a person more likely to be affected by heat include the use of certain medications, age, medical conditions like diabetes or obesity, and the use of alcohol, caffeine, or nicotine; also, simply not being used to working in hot conditions predisposes a person to heat stress. Some symptoms to look out for are dizziness, confusion, rapid

heartbeat, nausea, headache, muscle cramps, and fainting.

Under the rules, employers must supply each employee with at least one quart of water an hour. Employees showing signs of heat stress must be allowed to stop work, be given the means to lower their body temperature, and be monitored to make sure they don’t need medical attention, as elevated body temperatures can cause organ damage and death.

For resources on preventing heat-stress, check out the U.S. Army’s Web site at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/heat/>. — *L.E.*

**There has always been at least one guy** in the neighborhood out wielding his spatula in the dead of winter, snow swirling about his head as he flips a perfectly striped steak on his barbecue. Over the last 10 years, the number of these intrepid grillers has been growing, according to a report by the NPD Group, a market research firm based in Port Washington, N.Y. The study, "Eating Patterns in America," shows an increase in the percentage of households that grilled dinner in the winter, from 18.7 percent in 1998 to 26.5 percent in 2007. During the same period, the percentage of households grilling in the summer grew from 46.3 percent to 49.3 percent.

**Lumber prices are pushing up** as U.S. lumber mills — prompted by decreased demand from the housing industry — cut back production. According to *Random Lengths*, a lumber-industry publication, the amount of lumber available in the United States in the first quarter of 2008 was 20 percent less than in the same time period one year ago and 35 percent less than in 2006. Some of the reduction is attributable to significantly lower import volume from Canada, but U.S. production alone is down 14 percent compared with first quarter a year ago.

**If you bought a DeWalt DW744X or DW744XC** 10-inch Job-Site Table Saw between April 2007 and January 2008, check the

date code on the name plate on the front of the saw. If it's a number between 200715 and 200740, your saw may have a faulty pivot bracket that can separate and cause the fence and the blade to be misaligned — which in turn can cause kickback. Go to [dewalt.com](http://dewalt.com) or call 888/742-9168 to find out where you can obtain a replacement saw. Saws with an "X" stamped on the nameplate are not affected by the recall.

### **Azek Building Products**

recently acquired Composatron Mfg., maker of Premier and Trade-mark railings. The wood-PVC composite railings will continue to be manufactured at the Composatron plant in the Toronto area.

## 2008 Shows & Events

### **July 30–August 2**

**Southeast Building Conference**  
Florida Home Builders Association  
Orlando, Fla.  
800/261-9447  
[sebcshow.com](http://sebcshow.com)

### **August 20–24**

**Southern California Home & Garden Show**  
dmg world media  
Anaheim, Calif.  
877/452-0453  
[southerncaliforniahomeshow.com](http://southerncaliforniahomeshow.com)

### **September 3–6**

**NAWIC's 53rd Annual Convention**  
National Association of Women in Construction  
Las Vegas  
800/552-3506  
[nawic.org](http://nawic.org)

### **September 9–12**

**Remodeling Show**  
Hanley Wood Exhibitions\*  
Baltimore  
972/536-6461  
[theremodelingshow.com](http://theremodelingshow.com)

### **September 14–23**

**2008 Annual Conference and Final Action Hearings**  
International Code Council  
Minneapolis  
888/422-7233  
[iccsafe.org](http://iccsafe.org)

### **October 7–10**

**JLC Live Midwest**  
Hanley Wood Exhibitions\*  
Minneapolis  
800/261-7769  
[jlc.live.com](http://jlc.live.com)

### **November 15–20**

**International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo**  
Hanley Wood Exhibitions\*  
Las Vegas  
888/869-8522  
[poolspapatio.com](http://poolspapatio.com)

### **November 6–8**

**Sunbelt Builders Show**  
Texas Association of Builders  
Grapevine, Texas  
800/252-3625  
[sunbeltbuildersshow.com](http://sunbeltbuildersshow.com)

### **November 12–15**

**JLC Live Pacific Northwest**  
Hanley Wood Exhibitions\*  
Seattle  
800/261-7769  
[jlc.live.com](http://jlc.live.com)

\*Hanley Wood Exhibitions is owned by Hanley Wood, which also owns Professional Deck Builder. ❖