This Tip Sheet reflects code requirements of the 2015 International Residential Code (IRC) with Washington State Amendments.

- **Stair treads and risers**: The largest tread or riser within any flight of stairs is not to exceed the smallest by more than 3/8". (R311.7.5)

- **Illumination**:
  - Interior stairways shall be provided with an artificial light source to illuminate landings and treads. There shall be a wall switch at each floor level to control the light source where the stairway has 6 or more risers. (R303.7)
  - Exterior stairways shall be provided with an artificial light source located at the top landing of the stairway, and located at the bottom landing where accessing a basement. (R303.8)

- **Handrails**: Handrails are required on at least one side for stairways with four or more risers. See Tip Sheet 2 for additional information regarding handrails. (R311.7.8)

- **Landings required**: Landings are required at the top and the bottom of stairways. A floor landing is not required at the top of an interior flight of stairs, provided a door does not swing over the stairs. (R311.7.6)

- **Landing dimensions**: A landing extending the width of the stair and measuring a minimum of 36" in the direction of travel is required at the top and bottom of every stairway. (R311.7.6)

- **Circular, winding or spiral stairways**: For exceptions related to the construction of circular, winding, or spiral stairways. (R311.7.5.2.1 & R311.7.10)
Stair runs with 4 or more risers require a handrail. See Tip Sheet 2 for more information on the requirements for handrails. R311.7.8

Minimum required stairway width is 36”. R311.7.1

Typical Stair Elevation

Overhead obstruction

The minimum headroom of a stair is 6’-8”. (Measured vertically from the sloped plane adjoining the tread nosing) R311.7.3

No more than 147 inches between floor levels or landings.