



A Case Study: The Importance of a Railing During the Holidays



By Matthew Tombs and Neil Thorslund

"The smell of pine needles, spruce and the smell of a Christmas tree - those to me, are the scents of the holidays."

— **Blake Lively**

Safety during the holidays

The holidays are a time you want to spend with loved ones, sharing drinks, late nights, and special memories. If you're planning on hosting special events or holiday celebrations this season, you want everyone to have an amazing time. It is especially important to keep up your property to keep everyone safe. If you're wondering what role a railing system plays, ask yourself this question: Do you have parents, grandparents, or any other guests visiting that might need some extra help getting up the stairs?



A short story

Last winter, my aunt in her mid-70s was enjoying a family holiday celebration a couple days before Christmas. At the end of the night, after a few drinks, just as it was starting to snow, she slipped down the front steps which did not have a guard rail. Even though she only fell down a couple steps, she fractured her hip. She spent several days in the hospital and ended up needing hip replacement surgery. If anyone has had this surgery, they know how life-altering it can be! Two months went by before she was independent enough to do her own grocery shopping again.

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Why should I be especially concerned during the holidays?

Slips and falls become more of a hazard during winter months, and being prepared is as simple as having the correct stair railing installed. Did you know that in North America, as many as 1 in 3 seniors will experience a fall this winter? Most falls happen when going down outside stairs because of:

- Slippery steps
- Environmental factors like snow, sleet, or rain
- Poor balance
- Decreased strength
- Poor visibility in winter months



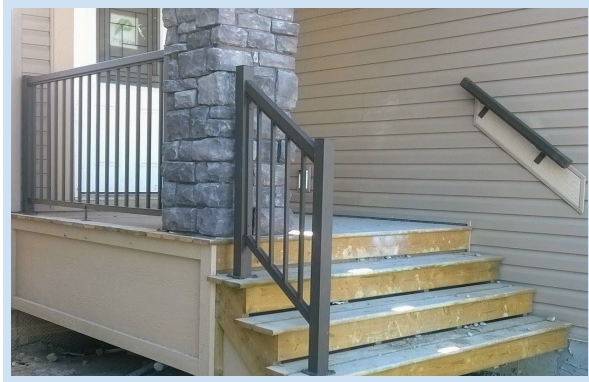
What factors should I consider when choosing my railing?

Height and depth of stairs

In the winter, climbing stairs is already difficult. If your stairs are too steep, having a strong railing won't help. Stairs that are easier to climb and descend are ones with lower riser heights, and larger tread depths.

1. Railing width

Young people may not even use a hand railing for support. However, think about someone with limited strength or arthritis: for optimal safety it's important to install thick hand rails like powder-coated aluminum or iron.



2. Stability

Consider family or friends that use a cane, for example. They will need to support their entire body weight using a hand rail. By using strong anchor-based railings, you ensure their safety.



3. Lighting

Winter months provide particularly poor visibility, especially at night when most functions take place. LED lights are a great choice as you can install them directly on the

stairs, or on railing posts, and angle them where elderly family will need to step.



When you're enjoying time with loved ones, the last thing you want to worry about is anyone getting hurt. Let Ottawa Deck and Rail help you customize your front stair railings to keep you and your loved ones safe this holiday season.

If you have any questions, give us a call or request a quote on our website.

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