

Hand Rails

Information:

The aim of this information is to provide basic directions for clients and their families regarding selection and placement of handrails in the home.

In general all rails should be:

- Be fixed firmly into a stud or dwang and be able to take the full weight of a person
- Have a non-slip grip if used in wet areas
- Be visible against the background especially if vision is compromised
- Provide a secure grip and preferably be circular in shape with diameter between 25-32mm
- Be installed with a clearance of 50mm between the rail and wall to avoid banging knuckles when gripping rail.

Suction Rails

Suction rails are not recommended – as they are mounted on the wall but not fixed securely into the wall framework.

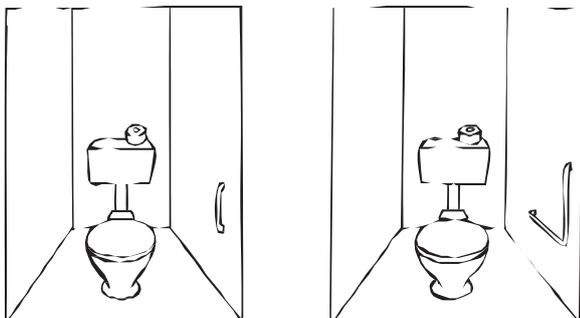
Safety using suction rails is dependent on:

- Type of wall surface being attached to
- Wetness/dryness of the wall
- Regular safety checks to ensure suction
- The amount of weight applied to the rail – is not able to support a persons weight

Hand Rail Placement

Toilet

Handgrips: Placement is ideally at arms length and shoulder height when the person is



seated on a toilet. It is preferable to have handgrips on both sides of the toilet (but not always possible).

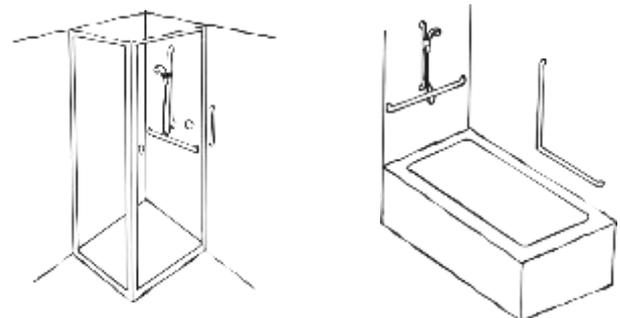
Diagonal rails: These are useful for a person who needs to move their grip upwards for support as they stand. A diagonal rail is also a good option if fixings cannot be located in an appropriate place for a handgrip, as a diagonal rail can run from stud to stud.

- The start of the rail should be adjacent to the end of the toilet;
- The end of the rail should be at arm's length and shoulder height when the person is seated on a toilet.
- L shaped rails: This may be the most appropriate rail for a person who needs to move their grip upwards for support as they stand or for support when transferring from a wheelchair onto a toilet independently. A more thorough assessment of transfer technique is required to establish the best placement of a rail in this situation.
- It is recommended that a referral is made to Occupational Therapy to provide individualised recommendations for this.

Shower or Shower Over Bath

Handgrips:

Often useful when stepping into and out of a shower. The handgrip should be vertical with the bottom of the grip at the height of their elbow when standing with arms by their sides.



Horizontal Rails:

Generally placed on the same wall as the shower rose at "tummy button" height when standing. This means the rail can be used when stepping into the shower and when standing.

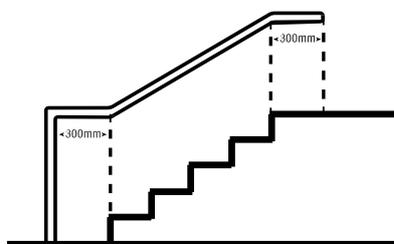
Vertical Rails:

- Can be beneficial on the back wall for use when turning or bending down when in the shower.
- Other equipment used in the shower such as shower stools or benches will need to be considered when deciding the best place for a rail.
- Rails are of limited assistance in getting up off the bottom of the bath. This remains a difficult manoeuvre and is generally not recommended if there is a safer alternative.
- An L shaped rail will allow for support to move from a seated position in the bath to standing.

Outside Rails

Outside Rails on Steps or Paths Should Be:

- At a height 850mm – 950mm (around hip height)
- Parallel to the pitch line of the steps
- Approximately 32 mm diameter and provide continuous grip
- Extend 300mm beyond the top and bottom steps,
- Made of galvanised pipe or similar



Handgrips for Over a Threshold Step Should:

- Be fixed vertically into the door frame
- Not impede opening or shutting the door and using a key
- Be at shoulder height when standing outside facing the door

Buying Rails

- The following businesses stock grab rails:

- Mobility Solutions Centre Heartlands
- Mitre 10 Mega
- PlaceMakers
- Local Builders & Engineer Companies

Installing Rails

If you do not have access to a handyman contact a local builder from the yellow pages.

Organisations such as Greypower, Age Concern or local resource centers or church groups may also be able to provide contacts for a handyman.

General

If you have a specific health condition/disability that means you may require more than a simple rail installation or if you have further queries regarding rail installation, please contact the Occupational Therapy Department.

Disclaimer

This is a general guideline only. The Occupational Therapy service takes no responsibility for inappropriate installation of handrails.

Contact:

Assessor is:

Phone No.

Family member:

Date equipment is due back: