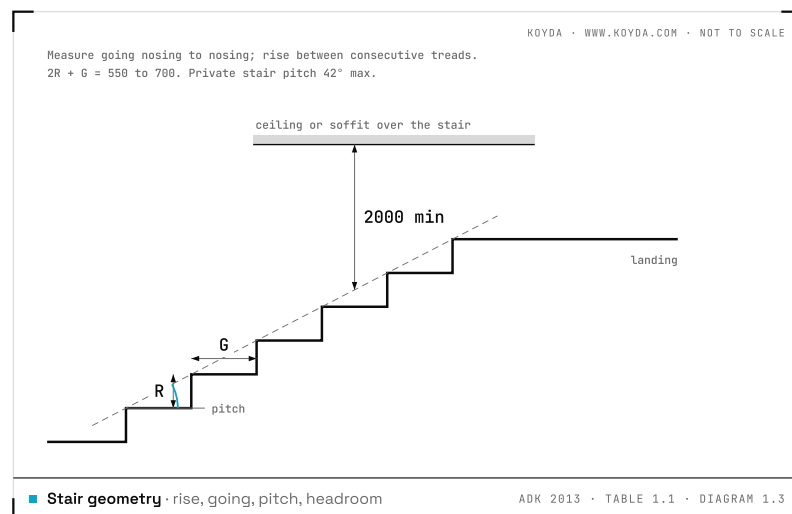


TECHNICAL GUIDE • QUICK REFERENCE

Stair Regulations: Rise, Going and Headroom

In England, a private stair in a house can have a rise of 150 to 220mm and a going of 220 to 300mm, with a pitch of no more than 42 degrees. Utility stairs allow a 150 to 190mm rise and general access stairs 150 to 170mm, both with a 250 to 400mm going. For every stair, $2R + G$ must be 550 to 700mm and headroom at least 2.0m.

ITEM	PRIVATE STAIR	UTILITY STAIR	GENERAL ACCESS STAIR	SOURCE
Rise	150–220mm	150–190mm	150–170mm	ADK Table 1.1
Going	220–300mm	250–400mm	250–400mm	ADK Table 1.1
2R + G	550–700mm	550–700mm	550–700mm	ADK Table 1.1 note
Maximum pitch	42°	Not stated (limits give about 37°)	Not stated (limits give about 34°)	ADK Table 1.1 note
Risers per flight	No limit; turn 30° after 36 in a row	16 max	12 max (16 in small premises)	ADK 1.17–1.18
Headroom	2.0m (loft conversion: 1.9m at centre, 1.8m at side)	2.0m	2.0m	ADK 1.11–1.13
Minimum width	Not set by ADK (see ADB for escape)	1200mm between walls, 1000mm between handrails	1200mm between walls, 1000mm between handrails	ADK 1.15–1.16
Open risers	Allowed: 16mm tread overlap, 100mm sphere must not pass	Not allowed	Not allowed	ADK 1.6, 1.9
Landings	Top and bottom, as wide and long as the flight	Same, 1200mm clear length	Same, 1200mm clear length	ADK 1.20, 1.23



Accessible stairs (ADM)

ITEM	EXTERNAL STEPPED ACCESS, OTHER BUILDINGS (ADM VOL 2)	STEPPED APPROACH TO A DWELLING, M4(1) (ADM VOL 1)
Rise	150–170mm	75–150mm
Going	280–425mm	280mm min
Flight size	12 risers (going under 350mm) or 18 risers (350mm or more)	1800mm total rise max
Width	1200mm min	900mm min
Landings	Top and bottom of each flight	900mm long min
Handrails	Both sides	One side, 850–1000mm high, for three or more risers

Widths, flights and landings

- Buildings other than dwellings: at least 1200mm between enclosing walls or strings and 1000mm between handrails. Flights wider than 2m should be divided into flights at least 1000mm wide (ADK 1.15).
- Dwellings: ADK sets no general minimum width. Approved Document B may set one for escape.
- No single steps. Where there are more than 36 risers in consecutive flights, change direction by at least 30° (ADK 1.17–1.18).
- Landings at the top and bottom of every flight, at least as wide and as long as the narrowest flight width. In a dwelling, a door may swing across the bottom landing if it leaves 400mm clear (ADK 1.20–1.24).

Tapered treads, spiral and helical

- Tapered treads: all consecutive tapered treads should have the same going, and the tapered going must not be less than the going of the straight flight. The narrow end must be at least 50mm (ADK 1.25–1.27, Diagram 1.9).
- Where the stair is less than 1m wide, measure the going at the centre. Where it is 1m or wider, measure 270mm in from each side.
- Spiral and helical stairs: ADK refers to BS 5395-2. We have not quoted its figures because the standard is not freely published; use the current edition.
- Alternating tread stairs and fixed ladders are only acceptable in loft conversions, for access to one habitable room (ADK 1.29–1.32).

Wales and Scotland

- Wales: Approved Document K for use in Wales applies. Check it for work in Wales.
- Scotland (domestic handbook 2022, Tables 4.3 and 4.4): private stair rise 100–220mm, going 225mm min, pitch 42° max. Other stairs: rise 100–170mm, going 250mm min, pitch 34° max. A new edition applies to warrants applied for from April 2026, so check the current handbook.

Common questions

What is the maximum rise for a stair in a house?

In England, a private stair in a house can have a rise of 150mm to 220mm and a going of 220mm to 300mm. The pitch must not exceed 42 degrees, and twice the rise plus the going (2R + G) must be between 550mm and 700mm. All the rises in a flight must be the same.

How much headroom does a staircase need?

Approved Document K asks for at least 2.0m clear headroom, measured vertically above the pitch line and over landings. In a loft conversion where that is not possible, 1.9m at the centre of the stair is acceptable, reducing to 1.8m at the side of the stair.

Sources

- Approved Document K: protection from falling, collision and impact (2013 edition, GOV.UK) · <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protection-from-falling-collision-and-impact-approved-document-k>
- Approved Document M Volume 2: buildings other than dwellings (2015 edition incorporating 2020 and 2024 amendments, GOV.UK) · <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>
- Approved Document M Volume 1: dwellings (2015 edition incorporating 2016 amendments, GOV.UK) · <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>
- Building standards technical handbook 2022: domestic, section 4.3 stairs and ramps (gov.scot) · <https://www.gov.scot/publications/building-standards-technical-handbook-2022-domestic/4-safety/4-3-stairs-ramps/>
- Approved Document K for use in Wales (GOV.WALES) · <https://www.gov.wales/approved-document-k-protection-falling-collision-and-impact>

Rise and going calculator: www.koyda.com/guides/stair-regulations/#calculator

Need a staircase designed, fabricated and installed? Send us your drawings.

Koyda Ltd
 Units 27-29 Jesmor Farm, St Piers Lane
 Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6PN

Email: joe@koyda.com
 Phone: 07753 213617
 Web: www.koyda.com · Mon-Fri 07:00-17:00

General guidance only, not design advice for a specific project. Figures checked against the sources listed in October 2026; standards and guidance change, so check the current edition and get project-specific advice from a competent designer. Koyda Ltd accepts no liability for decisions made using this sheet. Free to share, kept complete and unaltered. Full guide: www.koyda.com/guides/stair-regulations/ · KOY-STR-001 · Rev A · © Koyda Ltd, company no. 05632312.