



New Castle County Government Center  
87 Reads Way  
New Castle, DE 19720  
Department of Land Use - Building Inspections

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Date: **April 23 2014**  
Subject: **Landings for stairways**  
References: **2012 International Residential Code**

This Staff Code Interpretation is intended to be used to clarify Section 311.7.6 (Landings for stairways) and Section 311.7.7 (Stairway walking surface) in the above referenced Code Edition.

Below is the exact text from the sections of the 2012 International Residential Code in question.

***Section R311.7.6, Landings for stairways. There shall be a floor or landing at the top and bottom of each stairway. The minimum width perpendicular to the direction of travel shall be no less than the width of the flight served. Landings of shapes other than square or rectangular shall be permitted provided the depth at the walk line and the total area is not less than that of a quarter circle with a radius equal to the required landing width. Where the stairway has a straight run, the minimum depth in the direction of travel shall be not less than 36 inches.***

***Section R311.7.7, Stairway walking surface. The walking surface of treads and landings of stairways shall be sloped no steeper than one unit vertical in 48 inches horizontal (2-percent slope).***

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**Question:** Can the required landing at the bottom of an exterior stairway be the ground or a gravel surface that slopes not more than that permitted in Section R311.7.7?

**Answer:** The Code does not regulate the type of material to be used as a landing for an exterior stairway. The code does not prohibit the ground or gravel surface from serving as the landing provided that, at the time of final inspection, it complies with the required dimensions and slope.

George O. Haggerty  
Code Official

**STAFF CODE INTERPRETATION**