

10 July 2017

Departmental Circular No. 3/2017 (Transport Department)
Technical Circular No. 2/2017 (Highways Department)

Guidelines for the Provision and Design of Pedestrian Railings

Introduction

This Circular is jointly issued by the Transport Department (TD) and the Highways Department (HyD) to set out additional guidelines for the provision and design of pedestrian railings on public roads. It covers the railings required for traffic management and road safety purposes only, but not the ones for protection against objects falling from heights.

Background

2. In general, TD is responsible for considering the need, purpose and type of railings on public roads, while HyD as well as other works departments are responsible for the design and erection of railings. Detailed guidelines for the use of railings are set out in the Transport Planning and Design Manual (TPDM), Volume 2, Chapter 3, Section 3.9.2. To foster a pedestrian-friendly environment, TD and HyD have reviewed the current practices and formulated the following guidelines on the proper use of railings with due consideration given to alternative measures and railings of new designs.

The Guidelines

Purpose of Pedestrian Railings

3. Railings are not designed to protect pedestrians from vehicular impact but to control and guide pedestrians for road safety and traffic management purposes. They are

used across a wide range of sites including road junctions, pedestrian crossings, transport interchanges, school entrances/exits, central reserves and pedestrian refuge islands.

4. Notwithstanding the above, railings should not be considered as the only measure to achieve those purposes. Overuse of railings could cause public inconvenience and adverse effects on streetscape and footway capacity. Even if their provision is strongly justified, the type of railings to be used should be carefully selected. In general, pedestrian railings should **not** be provided:

- a) merely to deter illegal parking which should more appropriately be tackled by police enforcement, or by alternative measures such as construction of planters or bollards; and
- b) at roadside planters, or at footway with raised central medians/ central railing on carriageway which already serve as physical barriers.

Alternative Measures

5. Prior to installation of railings, alternative measures including but not limited to the followings should be thoroughly explored:

- a) Footway improvement;
- b) Relocation of public transport services points, pedestrian crossing, or installation of a new crossing to better serve the pedestrian routing;
- c) Provision of planters; and
- d) Use of bollards with/without chain.

Design and Choice of Railings

6. The design of railings should be simple, unobtrusive, having colours coherent with the surrounding environment and using minimum materials. The chosen railings must also be compatible with the neighbouring streetscape with appropriate visual and aesthetic design considerations. The following table categorizes various types of railings by purpose and intended use.

Purpose	Use	Choice of Railing
Control	Examples of controlling pedestrian movements: a) on footways where pedestrian flow exceeds footway capacity; b) at central islands of staggered crossings; and c) at central medians to prevent jaywalking.	HyD Standard Drawings – control category
Guidance	Examples of guiding pedestrians: a) near pedestrian/grade-separated crossings; and b) on footways where there is expected surge in pedestrian flow at times.	HyD Standard Drawings – guidance category

7. To enhance streetscape, customized railing designs are required at locations near historical buildings/monuments/tourist spots/landmarks/special sites. With TD’s input on the design/user requirements, HyD or other works departments would provide the customized designs in accordance with the above principles.

8. For any plan to use railings of new design in projects/new developments, TD and HyD should be consulted and invited to provide comments/input on the railing proposals which should be in compliance with this Circular.

Review

9. Regional Offices of TD will conduct regular reviews on local area under their purview to determine whether existing railings should be maintained, removed or replaced with due consideration to the followings:

- a) Compliance with the prevailing guidelines in TPDM and this Circular;
- b) Effectiveness of the railings;
- c) Public/local views;
- d) Changes of site characteristics such as pedestrian/traffic flows and adjoining developments; and
- e) Accident records.

10. Priority of the review should be given to areas with busy pedestrian traffic. Regional Offices of HyD should inform TD of road reconstruction or opening works under

planning so that any railing installation/removal works could be incorporated. The Regional Offices of TD should consider whether there is a need for local consultation before the works and if so, how the local consultation should be done, as well as evaluate and monitor the traffic impact afterwards.

Way Forward

11. Regional Offices of TD should consult their HyD counterparts to draw up a priority list for the review. The Regional Offices should also refer to the above guidelines in reviewing existing railings and the use of railings of new design.

Effective Date

12. This Circular takes immediate effect.

Enquiries

13. Enquiries in connection with the use and selection of different types of railings mentioned in this Circular should be addressed to the Road Safety and Standards Division of TD while enquiries on the design of railings should be addressed to the Research and Development Division (on engineering aspects) and Landscape Unit (on aesthetic aspects) of HyD.

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