

**Florida Building Code Binding Interpretation Report Number 178**

**Date: January 22, 2020**

**Report: 178**

**Code Edition: 6th Edition (2017)**

**Section: R312.1.1**

**Text of code provisions:**

**R312.1.1** Where required. Guards shall be located along open-sided walking surfaces, including stairs, ramps and landings that are located more than 30 inches (762 mm) measured vertically to the floor or grade below at any point within 24 inches (610 mm) horizontally to the edge of the open side. Insect screening shall not be considered as a guard.

Appeal question requesting a response:

Can the petitioner use planters as per the diagram(s) provided to make adjustments to grade from an open sided walking surface to be 30” or less measured vertically to the floor or grade below at any point within 24” horizontally to the edge of the open side as a means of achieving the necessary elevation as allowed by FBC Section312.1.1 to eliminate the need for guards?

**Answer:**

The Panel made two separate motions to answer the interpretation under appeal. Based on the two diagrams provided by the petitioner.

1. Planter option wall section 30 inches or less [above grade below]: In response to this specific design the Panel passed a motion with a ruling stating that this option does comply with the specific provisions of Section R312.1.1.
2. Planter option wall section greater than 30 inches [above grade below]: In response to this specific design the Panel passed a motion with a ruling stating that this option does comply with the specific provisions of Section R312.1.1.

Comment:

The Panel passed a motion stating that they feel an unsafe condition is created by having a limitation of only 24 inches of any point horizontally to the edge of the open side (of the planter wall) and that the original International Building Code provision which provided a limitation of only 36 inches should be considered for code adoption by the Florida Building Commission.

NOTICE:

The Building Officials Association of Florida, in cooperation with the Florida Building Commission, and the Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation, provides this interpretation of the Florida Building Code in the interest of consistency and application of the Building Code statewide. This interpretation is binding and not subject to acceptance and approval by the local building official.