

Timber Staircases

The Site Managers Checklist

The following checklist has been produced to assist those managing construction sites in the correct and safe installation of timber stairs.

Preparation: Prior to delivery or installation of a timber stair, pre-installation checks and risk assessments must be completed. The area of work should be cleared and other site personnel should not be able to access whilst installation is taking place.

Timing is everything: As the site manager, you should consider timing of the stair installation. If stair components are on site weeks before installation there is increased risk of costly damage or uptake of moisture. In addition, the actual installation should be scheduled to ensure that it does not interfere with any other key trade activities such as fitting floors or wet trade activities (remember an uncoated staircase can absorb moisture after fitting from drying plaster or a screed).

Liaising with the stair manufacturer and installer: The stair manufacturer is likely to have provided specific installation, care and maintenance, and warranty information about the stair they have supplied. It is important to contact the manufacturer before installation to understand if they have any guidance relating to the specific stair.

You can download **"BWF Installation Guide: Timber Stairs"** free from www.bwfstairscheme.org.uk. This documents sets down all the stages of the installation process, providing top tips on delivery and storage of the stair prior to installation, H&S guidance and assembly and fixing methods. This Guide is also supported by **Toolbox Talks** that can also be downloaded from the site.

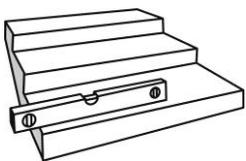
Delivery and storage: The delivery must be checked for completeness and any damage - the stair supplier should be notified immediately of any issues. Components must be stored in a dry, well ventilated area where they will not be damaged prior to installation.

Manual handling: Assembled stairs are heavy and cumbersome objects, it is important to ensure that risk assessments are done and that your stair installation team have been adequately trained in manual handling and that suitable lifting devices or assistance are used if required.

Competent and qualified workforce: Can you prove that your workforce is suitably trained and understands that accurate installation of a staircase is key to safety? This should be checked. Some BWF Stair Scheme manufacturers provide installation teams and others will be able to offer assistance by holding pre-start meetings and toolbox talks with your workforce.

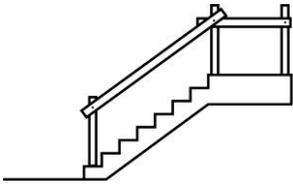
Measure twice, cut once: The critical dimensions that affect a staircase should be confirmed prior to manufacture to avoid installation issues. The manufacturer can advise on dimensioning and checking protocols and some will carry out site surveys to confirm accuracy of key dimensions such as finished floor-to-floor measurement. The manufacturer will also be able to advise on suitable tolerances required for positioning, fixing and installing the stair. Remember if the brick laying and/or floor finishes are inaccurate, the floor heights can vary and this can have a major (and costly) impact on the staircase.

Fixings and workmanship: Guidance is provided in the **BWF Stair Scheme Installation Guide** regarding fixing type and location. It is important to ensure that mechanical fixings are structurally graded and tested to EN 14592 and specification and location of fixings must be as per manufacturer's recommendations for the specific stair.



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Wall type and construction: Depending on wall material and construction type it is sometimes advisable to add additional support within the wall cavity for fixing of the string to the wall. Specific guidance should be sought from the building designer in collaboration with the stair manufacturer at the design stages of the project. This will also help to ensure that CDM Requirements are met.

Health and Safety: Installation of stairs can present risk if not managed correctly. A risk assessment should be carried out in order to identify and reduce risk to all involved in the process. It's important to consider the different risks at different times.



Temporary fixing: A timber stair should never be temporarily fixed and then used in service. If a staircase does not have the correct fixings or positioning in place, there is an increased risk of collapse, presenting a danger to all persons on site. If a temporary balustrade is used, reassure yourself that this is suitable and appropriate risk assessments are in place.

Ensuring safe access: The staircase is often used as the primary means of access to the upper floors for people and materials. The stair should not be used for access until the installation is complete and checked. When a staircase is being installed it must be temporarily guarded until full installation has taken place to prevent danger to those working nearby. Temporary guarding must comply with EN 13374:2004.

Protecting the stair: After installation, the stair must be protected from damage prior to building handover. Suitable tread and balustrade protection may be required for a prefinished staircase; some manufacturers provide protective materials and systems. Any protective coverings that are applied must be suitably fixed to ensure that no trip hazard has been presented to users. Some contractors prohibit use of the stairs after installation and prior to build handover to prevent damage. In this case, alternative means of access and evacuation need to be in place.

Job Handover: After completion, the stair should be inspected to ensure it has been competently and accurately installed. If there are any issues identified, the installer should be contacted immediately to rectify. If the issues pose a risk to the structural ability of the stair, access should be prohibited until remedial works have been undertaken.

It's all in the badge

- The BWF Stair Scheme – the only staircase accreditation and certification scheme in the UK.
- The standard expected of the manufacturers within the scheme is extremely high to ensure quality and safety.
- All companies within the scheme are regularly audited to ensure their products and their production meet these high standards.
- Each staircase has a unique label ensuring full traceability



Further Resources

Visit the BWF Stair Scheme Website: www.bwfstairscheme.org.uk to for a range of free downloads including our Staircase Design Guide, Detailed Installation Instructions and a range of Toolbox Talks aimed to help you and your team ensure hassle free staircase installations. If you are unsure of any terms or have concerns, please contact the manufacturer or BWF for clarity.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of advice given, the BWF cannot accept liability for loss or damage arising from the use of the information supplied. This risk criteria can be used for initial assessment purposes and covers general points, however, it should not be considered exhaustive. Always refer to the Building Regulations and if you are unsure of any terms or have concerns, please contact your manufacturer or BWF for clarity.