PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to identify a consistent determination of what circumstances require guardrail installations. A department policy is necessary for clarification of minimum code requirements.

"Unenclosed floor and roof openings, open and glazed sides of stairways, aisles, landings, and ramps, balconies or porches, which are more than 30 inches above grade or floor below, and roofs used for other than service of the building shall be protected by a guardrail." CBC Sec. 1013.1.

POLICY:

The building code definition for guard (Sec. 102.1): *A building component or system of building components located at or near the open sides of elevated walking surfaces that minimizes the possibility of a fall from the walking surface to the lower level.* The guardrail requirement is NOT meant to prevent falls from all natural or man-made grade changes. The requirement for guardrails on site conditions should apply to landings, ramps, and stairways leading to or from a building. A driveway or a site retaining wall not directly in conjunction with movement to or from a building would not fall under the requirement for a code complying guardrail.

Michael K. Whitaker, Chief Building Official