



**STONE  
BALUSTRADES  
CAN BE VERY  
DANGEROUS IF  
NOT INSTALLED  
PROPERLY**



**CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY:  
IMPROPERLY  
CONSTRUCTED  
STONE  
BALUSTRADES**

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**OBTAINING THE REQUIRED BUILDING PERMITS IS  
THE BEST FIRST STEP TO ENSURE SAFETY WHEN  
DOING CONSTRUCTION WORK IN NEW YORK CITY.**



## WHAT IS A STONE BALUSTRADE?

A stone balustrade is a stone railing or fence system that is comprised of individual stone posts that are topped with a stone rail. Depending on the style, there may also be other components such as a bottom rail.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW?

Only a stone balustrade installed accessory to a one or two family dwelling as a fence that is 6 ft or less in height does not require a permit from DOB. Most other cases of stone balustrade installations require a permit. Even if a permit is not required, stone balustrades must be constructed in accordance with the NYC Construction Codes to ensure safety.



## WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

In August 2019 and August 2021 there were collapses of stone balustrades that resulted in fatalities of children in New York City.

- It was found that the collapsed stone balustrades were not constructed in accordance with NYC Construction Codes, which require anchorage/ties (such as threaded rods) at the stone baluster connections.
- there was only glue/adhesive used. This improper connection was the main contributing factor in the collapses.
- In each photo, only glue was used at the stone baluster connections. This type of improper connection and lack of anchorage was the main contributing factor in the collapses.
- Similar stone balustrades are very common in the five boroughs.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Stone balustrades are heavy and can be very dangerous if not installed properly. It is important to have a structural engineer, architect, or licensed contractor inspect your balustrade or handrail. Arrange for repair immediately if any of the following is observed:

- loose or wobbly parts
- cracks in the stone, especially at the posts or balusters
- broken pieces or visible displacement
- if you suspect that your balusters or posts were installed without proper anchorage/ties.

