

Consider your children's safety when choosing rails

BY SARAH AWOR

Many people do not specifically consider the safety of their children when it comes to handrails.

According to Muhammad Nsereko, an architect, there are no special handrails for either the elderly or children, but what matters is the design that one uses and the spacing from one bar to the other.

"We have challenges with people who come with different styles in mind and when we offer advice on what can work best for them, they do not listen. So we do as they wish," he states. Nsereko recommends a spacing of 10cm instead of 20cm, where a child may easily fall through and sustain serious injuries.

Eddie Mugabi, who runs a metal and aluminum shop in Namugongo, Wakiso district, says people consider different things such as security, the price and beauty when looking for rails. "Sometimes when we give advice, our clients think we want to dodge a complicated job. So we make sure we follow their instructions and give them what they want," he says.

Mugabi adds that the cost depends on the quality of materials and the size of the balcony. He charges between sh80,000 and sh100,000 per square metre of a balcony.

Balustrades

Edward Osiru, a resident of

Kireka, Kamuli Zone A, says he chose concrete balustrades because they are cheap and long-lasting.

"In 1999, when I was finishing my house, balustrades cost between sh3,000 and sh5,000. The price is slightly higher now at sh8,000 to sh10,000," he says. He says handrails tend to rust and this can make them harmful to children and besides, they are also expensive in terms of re-painting when they rust.

Height

Nsereko says the standard height of the railing on a balcony is 90cm, but to ensure children's safety, one may decide on something higher.

"Nowadays, people do not seem concerned about their tenants' safety and the Government does not have a strategic policy that controls how people put up their buildings. Therefore, everyone does what he or she feels like," he says.

Cost

Nsereko says with the standard height, the railing may cost sh2m, while the enclosed handrails may go for about sh4m.

Steel handrails

Steel handrails cost between sh100,000 and 150,000 per metre, while the aluminum handrails and the stainless steel cost sh300,000 per metre.

