



Code Administrators, Inc.

Plan Review ~ Code Inspection ~ Code Consulting ~ Code Education ~ Code Development
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DECK PLAN SUBMITTAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to assist municipal residents with the permit acquisition process with regard to decks for single family dwellings.

PERMIT APPLICATION

The first step in the permit process is to completely fill out the appropriate zoning, use and/or building permit applications. It is important to fill out all applicable areas of the permit applications including all necessary signatures.

PLAN SUBMITTAL

Along with the Permit Application, 3 sets of framing plans, 3 copies of a deck cross section and 3 copies of a site plan are required. The site plans are for zoning review, and the floor plans and the deck cross sections are for review by the Building Official. One set of complete plans will remain with the Building Official in order to facilitate in the inspection process, while the second set of plans will be returned to the applicant.

GENERAL REFERENCE

- Check with local zoning official for property line distance requirements.
- Decks are required to provide a live load factor of 40 pounds per square foot.
- All wood decks which have a walking surface five (5) feet above grade must be supported by 6" x 6" columns, or a design for lateral displacement must be submitted.
- Any electrical work performed in conjunction with deck projects must be inspected.
- Please refer to the building permit number when calling for inspections.
- No building or structure that requires a permit may be used or occupied without obtaining a Certificate of Use and Occupancy after approved final inspection by the Code Official.
- Decks connected to a cantilever floor and wall system must be reviewed by an engineer.



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CODE REFERENCE:

The following code sections may be helpful when planning a deck addition. The applicable reference is the 2006 International Residential Code:

- ✓ **506.2 Bearing.** The ends of each joist, beam or girder shall have not less than 1.5 inches of bearing on wood or metal and not less than 3 inches on masonry or concrete except where supported on a 1 inch by 4 inch ribbon strip and nailed to the adjacent stud or by the use of *approved* joist hangers.
- ✓ **502.6.1 Floor Systems.** Joists framing from opposite sides over a bearing support shall lap a minimum of 3 inches and shall be nailed together with a minimum three 10d face nails. A wood or metal splice with strength equal to or greater than that provided by the nailed lap is permitted.
- ✓ **502.6.2 Joist Framing.** Joists framing into the side of a wood girder shall be supported by approved framing anchors or on ledger strips not less than nominal 2 inches by 2 inches.
- ✓ **502.7 Lateral restraint at supports.** Joists shall be supported laterally at the ends by full-depth solid blocking not less than 2 inches nominal thickness; or by attachment to a full-depth header, band or rim joist, or to an adjoining stud or shall be otherwise provided with lateral support to prevent rotation.
- ✓ **502.8 Drilling and notching.** Notches in the top and bottom of joists shall not exceed one-sixth the depth of the joist and shall not be located in the middle third of the span. Where joists are notched at the ends for a ledger, the notch shall not exceed one-fourth the joist depth. Cantilevered joists shall not be notched unless the reduced section properties and lumber defects are considered in the design.
- ✓ **502.8 Holes.** Holes drilled or bored in joists shall not be within 2 inches of the top or bottom of joists and their diameter shall not exceed one-third the depth of the joist.
- ✓ **502.9 Fastening.** Where post and beam or girder construction is used to support floor framing, positive connections shall be provided to ensure against uplift and lateral displacement.
- ✓ **311.5.1 Stairway width.** Stairways shall not be less than 36 inches in clear width at all points above the permitted handrail height. Handrails shall not project more than 4.5 inches on either side of the stairway. The minimum width at and below the handrail height shall not be less than 31.5 inches where a handrail is installed on one side and 27 inches where handrails are provided on both sides.



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- ✓ **PA UCC. Treads and risers.** The maximum riser height shall be 8.25" and the minimum tread depth shall be 9 inches plus a 1 inch nosing. The riser height shall be measured vertically between the edges of the adjacent treads. The tread depth shall be measured horizontally between the vertical planes of the foremost projection of adjacent treads and at a right angle to the tread's leading edge. The greatest tread depth within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8 inch.
- ✓ **311.5.6 Handrails.** Handrails having minimum and maximum heights of 34 inches and 38 inches respectively, measured vertically from the nosing of the treads, shall be provided on at least one side of stairways of four or more risers. All required handrails shall be continuous the full length of the stairs. Ends shall be returned or shall terminate in newel posts or safety terminals.
- ✓ **311.5.6.3 Handrail grip size.** Handrails shall have either a circular cross section with a diameter of 1.25 inches to 2 inches, or a noncircular cross section with a perimeter dimension of at least 4 inches but not more than 6.75 inches and the largest cross-section dimension not exceeding 2.25 inches.
- ✓ **311.6 Ramps.** Ramps shall have a maximum slope of one unit vertical in twelve units horizontal unless it is technically infeasible to comply because of site constraints. In this case, the maximum slope shall not exceed a maximum slope of one unit vertical in eight horizontal.
- ✓ **312 Guardrail details.** Decks, porches or raised floor surfaces located more than 30" above the floor or grade below shall have guardrails not less than 36" in height. Open sides of stairs with a total rise more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below shall have guardrails not less than 34" in height measured vertically from the nosing of the treads.
- ✓ **312 Guardrail opening limitations.** Required guardrails on open sides of stairways shall not allow the passage of a sphere 4-3/8" or more in diameter. Raised floor areas and porches or waking surfaces more than 30" above grade shall have intermediate rails or ornamental closures which do not allow the passage of a sphere 4 inches or more in diameter.