



Residential Decks

When do I need a deck permit?

A permit is required for construction, replacement, relocation, or alteration of any deck with a roof, or over a basement or story below. The permit fee is based on the square footage of the deck. Fee estimates are available at the counter or over the phone at the Permit Center (425) 377-3235.

How do I know my plans are good enough?

Our plans examiner looks for a line of connection from the ground to the roof. If this deck could be built by anyone who looks at your plans without any further information supplied by you, the plans are probably complete. When applying for a permit, the following must accompany your application:

- Completed application form
- 2 copies of your site plans on 8 ½" 11" paper
- 2 copies of your complete set of plans which include:
 - Plan view (from above),
 - Elevation (from the side, front, or both),
 - Section view (a view through the middle),
 - Framing plan (shows foundations, beams, and joists),
 - Roof plan (if applicable). Construction details, including connections. Connections may be nails, but sometimes other hardware is necessary.

Floor construction

- Verify that deck placement, setback, size, and materials are per approved plans.
- All deck material treated or naturally resistant to decay. (R319.1 & R319.2)
- Fasteners and hardware for pressure preservative and fire-retardant-treated wood are of hot-dipped galvanized steel, stainless steel, silicon bronze, or copper. (R319.3) Joisting can be untreated if approved weatherproof decking membrane is used. NOTE: Soffits allowed when ventilated. (R319.3)
- Ledger for decks bolted/lagged to structure with minimum 3/8" bolts/lags, a minimum 16" o.c., staggered or per approved plan. (R502.2.1)
- Footings are minimum 12" below grade to bottom of footings for freeze protection. (R403.1.4)

Stairs

- 6'8" minimum headroom at stairways measured vertically from the nose of the treads, landings, or platforms. (R311.5.2)
- All stairs are provided with illumination. (R311.5.7 & R303.6)
- Open risers don't allow passage of 4" sphere. Exception: Stairs with a rise of 30" or less. (R311.5.3.3)
- Each step shall not exceed others by more than 3/8".
- Stair riser maximum 7 3/4" treads, run minimum 10". (R311.5.3)

Guard Railing

- Decks >30" vertical above floor or grade plane shall have guardrails not less than 36" in height. (R312.1)
- Balusters, pickets, don't allow passage of 4" sphere. (R312.2)
- Triangle formed by riser, tread, and bottom element of guard doesn't allow passage of 6" sphere. (R312.2)

Handrails

- Handrails and guards capable of withstanding 200 lbs. applied in any direction at any point on the rail. (IBC 1607.7.1)
- Handrail at stairs with 4 or more risers. (R311.5.6)
- Handrail minimum 34" to maximum 38" above nose of tread to top of handrail. (R311.5.6.1)
- Type I handrails with circular cross sections 1 1/4" - 2" diameter. (R311.5.6.3) See Tip Sheet 2.
- Handrail returns to wall, maximum 4 1/2" off wall with minimum 1 1/2" clear space from inside of rail to wall. (R311.5.1, R311.5.6.2)