

RESIDENTIAL DECKS Information Sheet

Decks shall conform to the provisions of the 2012 IRC

Building Permits	Required for any deck attached to a structure or any detached deck.
Frost Footings	Required for any deck attached or detached. The minimum depth to the base of the footing is 42".
Live Load	All decks shall be designed to support a live load of 60 pounds per square foot.
Guardrails	Required on all decks more than 30 inches above grade or a lower deck. Rail must be 36 inches minimum in height. Open guardrails and stair railings must have intermediate rails or an ornamental pattern that a four inch sphere cannot pass through. <i>Exception:</i> The triangular opening formed by the riser, tread and bottom element of a guardrail may be sized so that a six inch sphere cannot pass through.
Cantilevers "Overhanging Joist and Beams"	Joists should not overhang beams by more than two feet, nor should beams overhand posts by more than one foot unless a special design is approved.
Flashing	All connections between deck and dwelling shall be weatherproof. Any cuts in exterior finish shall be flashed.
Framing Details	Header beams and joists that frame into ledgers or beams shall be supported by approved framing anchors such as joist hangers.
Nails and Screws	Use only stainless steel, high strength aluminum or hot-dipped galvanized.
Wood Required	All exposed wood used in the construction of decks is required to be of approved wood of natural resistance to decay (redwood, cedar, etc.) or approved treated wood. This includes post, beams, joists, decking and railing.
Stairs	Minimum width is 36 inches. Maximum rise is 7 ¾ inches, minimum rise is 4 inches. Minimum run is 10 inches. Largest tread width or riser height shall not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8 inch.
Handrails	The top shall be placed not less than 34 inches or more than 38 inches above the nosing of the treads. Stairways having four or more risers shall have at least one handrail. Handrail ends shall be returned or terminated in post. The hand grips dimension or the shape shall provide an equivalent gripping surface. The handgrip shall have a smooth surface with no sharp corners.
Special Design Note	Some deck designs may not be appropriate should the placement of a screen porch or 3-season porch on the deck platform be a future consideration. Setbacks for porches are not the same as setbacks for decks.
