



Residential Deck FAQ's

A Building Permit is required for a deck regardless of size and height in order to ensure proper setbacks are in place to conform to the City's Zoning Bylaws.

The following is considered general information and each project will have conditions for which additional Code requirements may apply. Please consult with the Building Officer for any clarifications or additional requirements.

Who can design a deck? The owner of a house is allowed to prepare, or have prepared, and take responsibility for the design of a deck, however the plans and specification must be prepared in sufficient detail to demonstrate the project will comply with the requirements of the National Building Code and City of Summerside Bylaws.

Do I need a foundation?

Is the deck more than one storey? If yes, a foundation is required. (Ref: NBC 9.12.2.2.7(a))

Is the deck more than 55m² (600ft²) in area? If yes, a foundation is required. (Ref: NBC 9.12.2.2.7(b))

Does the deck support a roof? If yes, a foundation is required. (Ref: NBC 9.12.2.2.7(d))

Is the deck attached to another structure? If yes, a foundation is required, regardless of height, if the movement of the deck would adversely affect the performance of the structure it is attached to. (Ref: NBC 9.12.2.2.7(e))

Can I use deck blocks? Deck blocks can only be used where;

1. The deck is not attached to the house
2. The deck is less than 55m² (592ft²)
3. The distance from the finished ground to the top of deck is not more than 830mm (30") at any point.

What are foundation requirements? The foundation may consist of a concrete wall, concrete piers (i.e. *Sonotube, Bigfoot, Footing Tube*, etc.) (9.17.4.1(2)). The foundation is to extend to a minimum depth of 4' from finish grade and include a footing. Column base hardware connections are required to connect wood posts to concrete piers. Helical piles (screw piles) may be used, an engineered layout plan is required and installation must be by a certified installer.

How high is the deck? If the deck is less than 0.83m (30"), measured from surrounding grade to top of deck, the deck requires a permit but is not subject to building code or any other structural requirements of the City. (Ref: Bylaw SS-09.5 (C). Decks above 30" will require a foundation (NBC 9.12.2.2 (7)).

Can I repair my deck without a permit? No permit is required for repairing a deck under 30" in height for a single family dwelling. If you are adding to an existing deck, a permit is required. (Ref: Bylaw SS-09.5 (C))

What size posts are required? Decks require minimum 6" X 6" posts (columns) unless calculations are provided from a qualified person confirming that a lesser size is adequate.

What are the beam requirements? In most cases a 3-ply 2x8 beam is required to span a maximum of 8' between the posts. The beam is to bear directly on top of the posts and is to be connected to the post with a post cap (NBC 9.23.1.1 (2) & 4.3.1.1 & CSA O86).

What are the requirements for attaching to a house? The ledger board/header joist is to be attached to the house rim joist using ½" lag screws stagger-spaced not more than 18" on center. The top of the ledger board is to be flashed. The ledger must attach to a solid structure (rim joist, rim board, concrete wall).

When do I need a guard (railing) and how high should it be? When the deck height above ground is over 2' but less than 6' then a 3' (36") high railing (guard) is required. If the deck is higher than 6', then a 3'-6" (42") high railing (guard) is required. The railing posts are required to be no more than 8' apart and the spacing of the spindles/balusters may be no more than 4" on center. Lattice cannot be used in place of



balusters or guards. Posts (4"x4"min) are required for all guard railings and are to be blocked in the structure or through-bolted with ½" bolts with washers. Notching of post is prohibited (NBC 9.8.8.1 (1), (9.8.8.3) & (9.8.8.5))

Do I need a guard (railing) if my deck is less than 2' above the ground? No, but if one is installed it should meet the minimum height of 3' and Building Code requirements.

Do my stairs require a guard/handrail? If the stairs have more than three risers, then yes, a handrail is required. If the difference in height from the ground to the deck is more than 2' a guard is required on both sides (if not protected by a wall) and set at a height between 34" and 38", when measured from the tread nosing. (NBC 9.8.7.1(4))

Can I build a bench along the railing? If a bench is incorporated into the guard the required guard height is measured above the bench surface, which may require a design by an engineer.

Common Inspection Deficiencies

- Notching of railing posts
- Beam not bearing on top of posts
- Use of improper, split or undersized pickets (spindles, balusters) in guards
- Splicing of beams not over supports
- Use of unauthorized material or systems
- Unauthorized changes from permit drawings
- Missing post cap to beam connectors
- Undersized supporting posts/columns (4x4 used instead of 6x6)

With the submission of a Building Permit Application we will require:

1. A copy of a survey/site plan showing in metric dimensions;
 - a. Lot lines including dimensions
 - b. Location of proposed deck dimensioned to all other buildings and lot lines, all decks must be located and configured in compliance with the zoning bylaw
 - c. Civic address and property number

2. A completed "Deck Permit-Supplemental Information Form" or;
 - a. One copy of deck construction drawings. The drawings must have sufficient detail so that someone, by following the drawings, could build the deck. The following shall be provided:
 - b. Foundation plan detailing;
 - i. Footing size and location, pier/post type and spacing
 - ii. Size, span, and direction, of beams, floor joists and decking
 - iii. Dimensions of all components
 - c. Elevations to show:
 - i. The general appearance of the deck
 - d. Cross Section Detailing:
 - i. Footing depth and construction
 - ii. Height of deck walking surface above grade
 - iii. Height of guard above walking surface
 - iv. Step details
 - v. Deck construction
 - vi. Guard construction
 - vii. Details, such as deck to house connection