

# **RESIDENTIAL DECKS**

## **BUILDING INSPECTIONS DIVISION**

**217/424-2787**

### **I. Basic Requirements**

- A. A building permit application with a site location map is required to be filled out. The map should show the size of the deck and location of the deck in relation to the house, applicable property setbacks and any other structures on the property such as a garage or shed and overhead power lines. Decks are required to clear the front, rear and side yard setbacks that are applicable for the particular zoning district of the property and to clear any other structure by at least 8 feet. Power lines shall not be any lower than 10' from the deck walking surface. See figure #1 for an example map.
- B. Decks that have a walking surface that is 30 or more inches above grade shall have a guardrail on all open sides. The guardrail minimum height shall be 36 inches above the walking surface with required vertical members in the guardrail system no more than four inches apart. See figure #2 for a typical guardrail detail.

### **II. Construction Requirements**

- A. All wood used for construction purposes shall be pressure treated lumber or other approved materials. All deck fasteners including lag bolts, thru bolts, hangers, and screws shall be of galvanized or rust resistant material and approved for use with treated lumber.

- B. Footings for support posts shall be a minimum depth of 36 inches below grade. Support posts should be placed on top and anchored to 36 inch deep concrete piers or a 6 inch thick poured concrete pad two times the width of the post can be placed in the bottom and the remainder of the hole back filled with dirt. Posts supporting walls and/or a roof shall be anchored to the top of a 36 inch deep concrete pier that is at least 12 inches in diameter. Support posts shall be a minimum of nominal 4x4 inch lumber spaced at a maximum of 8 feet. See figure #3 for typical footing details.
- C. Deck beams shall be attached to the support posts with ½ inch minimum diameter lag or thru bolts. Joists can be attached to beams using joist hangers.
- D. The deck surface can be of nominal 2 inch thick lumber or deck boards and preferably be fastened with screws.
- E. Steps for decks shall have a maximum riser height of 7 ¾ inches and a minimum tread depth of 10 inches and a minimum width of 36". Riser height must be uniform varying not more than 3/8 inch. Guardrails are required for open sides of steps when the deck surface is 30 inches or more above grade. Guardrails shall be 34 to 38 inches in height measured from the nosing of the tread and be continuous in run with vertical members in the guardrail system no more than four inches apart and not creating a ladder effect. If a bottom rail is used as part of the guard, it

shall be placed so that a sphere of 6 inches in diameter cannot pass through the triangular opening formed by the bottom rail, riser and tread. See figure #4 for a typical stair guardrail detail.

### III. Inspections

An inspection shall be called for after the post holes are dug and before any concrete is poured. A final inspection is required after the deck is completed and before being used.

Inspection requests should be called in 24 hours prior to the needed inspection. Inspection hours are between 8:30 and 4:00 p.m. M-F.

### IV. Permit Fee

A permit fee of \$0.15 per square foot of deck area or a minimum of \$50 whichever is greater, is required at the time the building permit application is filed.

### V. Contacts

Any questions regarding deck building permits and construction can be answered by calling 217/424-2787 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

**NOTE:** This information pamphlet is not intended to contain all of the information you need for your particular project, but is intended only as a guideline.

