

DECK CONSTRUCTION

Please make a rough sketch of deck in the area below:

Physical dimensions of deck or porch:

Length _____ ft. Width _____ ft. Hgt. _____
(for irregular shapes the longest dimension)

Footing depth from final grade: _____ inches

Post pad? Poured on site or pre-cast pads/donuts

Post dimension? _____ Maximum spacing between posts _____

Girder dimension? _____ If multiple how many? _____

Floor joist dimension? _____ Spacing _____ OC

Floor joist maximum span distance between supports? _____ ft.

Decking material dimension? _____

Will hand rails be installed? _____
(refer to code information)

Will guard rails be installed? _____
(refer to code information)

ROOF INFORMATION

Roof Construction? Trusses or Rafters

Roof Pitch? _____

Trusses: Length _____ ft. Spacing _____ inches OC

Rafters: Dimension _____ Spacing _____ inches OC

Maximum span distance? _____ ft.

Sheathing Type & Size _____ Clips _____

Roofing Materials? _____

Type of Attic Venting? _____

DECKS AND COVERED OPEN PORCHES

The following information is a general guideline and includes code questions that are often asked during the permitting or construction process of a deck or open porch:

All construction requires a Zoning Compliance Permit to be completed, submitted and approved before construction begins. The Zoning Compliance Permit is mandatory regardless of the size of the construction area. There is no cost for this permit.

Open decks less than 100 square feet and less than 30 inches (30") from adjacent grade do not require a building permit, but still require a Zoning Compliance Permit. Decks and porches that are being enlarged where the existing and the new construction are equal to or greater than 100 square feet require a building permit, even if the new construction is less than 100 square feet.

Attaching or not attaching the deck to the house makes no difference; a building permit is needed for either, if the square footage is met.

Often asked residential code questions:

1. Handrails are required when you have three (3) or more steps and need to be located between 34 and 38 inches (34" and 38") measured vertically from the nose of the step. A handrail must be something that can be grasped comfortably by a child and an adult.
2. Guardrails are required when the deck surface to the adjacent surface directly below is 30 inches (30") or greater. In other words, if a ball were to roll off the edge of the deck and fall 30 inches (30") or more, a guard is required by code. This same criteria is used along the side of a stairway with the exception of guardrail height, which can be 34 inches (34").
3. When guards are required, they are to be constructed a minimum of 36 inches (36") tall and so as not to allow a 4 inch (4") ball to pass through at any point. They are not to be constructed in a ladder effect to allow for climbing. They must be of sturdy construction to withstand a heavy side impact.
4. Footings are required and must be below the frost line. This means a minimum of 42 inches (42") below grade in Michigan. The footprints of the posts being used and the soil they are being set on must be able to support the total loading; floor load and roof load if applicable. Set concrete or pre-cast pads, no dry powder, minimum of 8 inches (8") in diameter, are required unless specifications indicate otherwise.
5. A drawing showing complete construction information and/or the "Deck Construction Information" sheet (reverse side) must be completed and submitted with application to obtain a building permit. Be sure to make a copy for yourself.