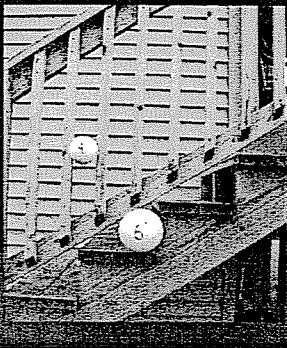
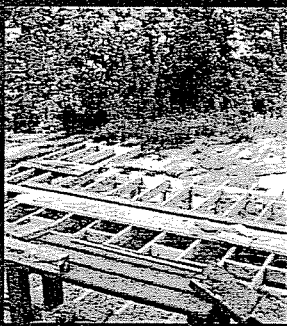
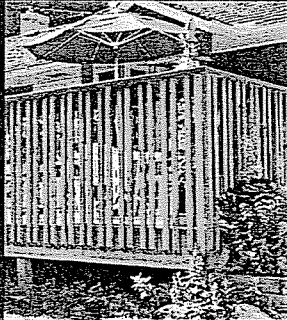


DECKS

*Guidelines for planning
the construction
of a deck.*



Building Codes and Standards Division

408 Metro Square Building
121 East 7th Place
St. Paul, MN 55101-2181
651.296.4639
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Fax: 651.297.1973

[www.buildingcodes.
admin.state.mn.us](http://www.buildingcodes.admin.state.mn.us)

www.mncodes.org

PERMITS

Building permits are required for all decks that are attached to the home or are 30 inches or more above grade. Decks and platforms not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade and not attached to a structure with frost footings do not require a building permit.

Decks and platforms are required to meet the land use requirements of the community's zoning code. Zoning questions should be directed to the local planning and zoning department. This is an important first step in the planning of any deck project.

PERMIT FEES

Permit fees are established by the municipality. The plan review is done by the building inspector in order to spot potential problems or pitfalls that may arise. The inspector may make notes on the plan for your use. The plan review and inspections are done to provide a reasonable degree of review and observation so the project will be successful, safe, and long-lasting. Actual permit costs can be obtained by calling your local Building Inspection Department with your estimated construction value.

Your Building Inspector will need a number of items. These may include an application for permit, site plan or survey (with specific setback information), and building plans. Examples of these are provided in the rest of this brochure. The inspector may inform you of potential problems or make suggestions. Safety will receive the greatest priority.

REQUIRED INSPECTIONS

(Verify with municipality)

1. **Footings:** After the holes are dug, but **PRIOR TO THE POURING OF CONCRETE!**
2. **Framing:** To be made after all framing, blocking, and bracing are in place and prior to covering the construction so it is accessible for inspection. This inspection can be completed at the time of the final inspection if all parts of the framing will be visible and accessible.
3. **Final:** To be made upon completion of the deck and finish grading.
4. **Other inspections:** In addition to the three inspections above, the inspector may make or require other code inspections, such as an electrical inspection, to ascertain compliance with the provisions of the code or to assist you with your questions or concerns during the construction process.

SETBACKS

Setbacks from property lines vary depending upon the city and zoning district your home is located in. Contact the Building or Planning Department in your community for the requirements in your location. This is an important first step in the planning for any deck project.

GENERAL BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

- a. Footings must extend to frost depth (if attached to the house).
- b. Decks need to be designed for a 40-pound per square foot live load and balconies to a 60 pound per square foot live load. Decks exposed to the weather must be constructed of approved wood with natural resistance to decay such as redwood, cedar or treated wood, or other material (composite plastics, etc.) with prior approval of the building inspector.
- c. **Pressure-Treated Wood**
Recent changes have been made in the chemicals used in the manufacture of pressure-treated wood. Chromated copper arsenate, also known as CCA, is being phased out and the most common new treatments approved for outdoor use are Alkaline Copper Quaternary (ACQ) and Copper Azole. According to the lumber and fastener industry, the newer chemicals being used to treat the wood approved

DECKS *continued*

for outdoor use are considerably more corrosive than those previously treated with CCA and therefore require special fasteners, hangers, and greater care in the selection of materials that may come in contact with the wood. The fastener industry has indicated that some of the hangers and fasteners currently on the market may not perform with some of the new treatments.

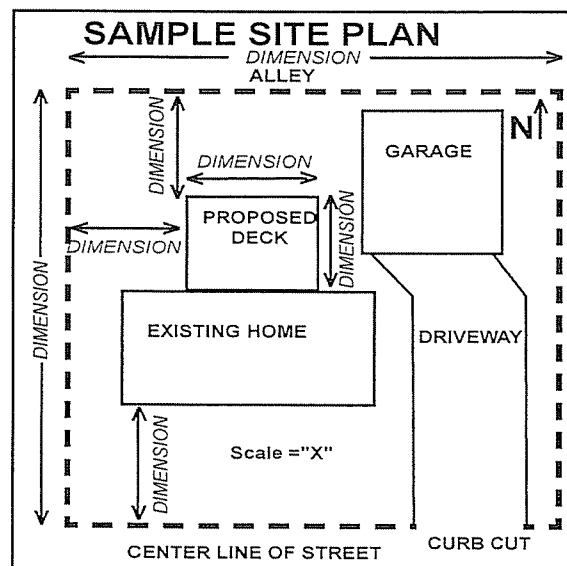
Designers, builders, and home owners will need to pay particular attention to the grade marks on the lumber, and verify that proper hardware (hangers, nails, brackets) are appropriate with the particular treatment of the lumber. This not only applies to decks utilizing these products but sill plates and posts as well. The code references the American Wood Preservers Association (AWPA), which has published information on this issue. Particular attention should also be made to the manufacturer's installation instructions for the hardware. Questions should be directed to your wood and fastener supplier or your local Building Official.

- d. Columns and posts in contact with the ground or embedded in concrete, earth or masonry must be of special pressure treated wood approved for ground contact.
- e. Cedar or redwood posts need an 8 inch separation from the ground.
- f. All decks, balconies or porches, open sides of landings and stairs which are more than 30 above grade or a floor below must be protected by a guard not less than 36 inches in height. Open guard and stair railings require intermediate rails of an ornamental pattern such that a sphere 4 inches in diameter cannot pass through.
- g. If a stairway is to be provided, it must be not less than 36 inches in width. Stairways may be constructed having an 8-inch maximum rise (height) and a 9-inch minimum run (length). The largest tread rise and tread run may not exceed the smallest corresponding tread rise or run by more than $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. Stairway illumination is required by the code..
- h. Handrails are required on all stairways having 4 or more risers. Handrails may not be less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ " nor more than $2\frac{5}{8}$ " in cross sectional area. Top of handrail must be not less than 34 inches nor more than 38 inches above the nosing (front edge) of treads and they must be returned to a wall or post.
- i. The electrical code requires overhead power lines to be located a minimum 10 feet above decks and platforms. Existing lines may need to be raised if a new deck is to be installed beneath them.
- j. **Outside meters, wells, and septic systems.** When locating a deck care must be given to the location of existing gas and electric meters, wells, and septic systems. These may need to be relocated to allow for construction of the deck. Septic systems and wells may be difficult to relocate, requiring an alternative location for the deck. Prior to placement of any deck that will interfere with these devices, contact your local Building Inspector.
- k. **Outside water meter readers.** Some communities use a remote outside meter water meter-reading device that may need to be relocated to allow for construction of a deck. These devices must be relocated properly and may require special tools. Prior to placement of any deck, that will interfere with the operation or accessibility of the reader, contact you local Building Inspector or Water Department to obtain information and procedures on relocating these devices. Note: For specific code requirements, please contact your local Building Department.

PLANS: SITE, FLOOR, and ELEVATION

The following text and sample drawings show the minimum detail expected so the permit process can proceed smoothly. **TWO sets of each plan are required.** Plans do not need to be professionally drawn. Plans should include all of the information requested. The application for permit can be filled out at the time you drop off your plans.

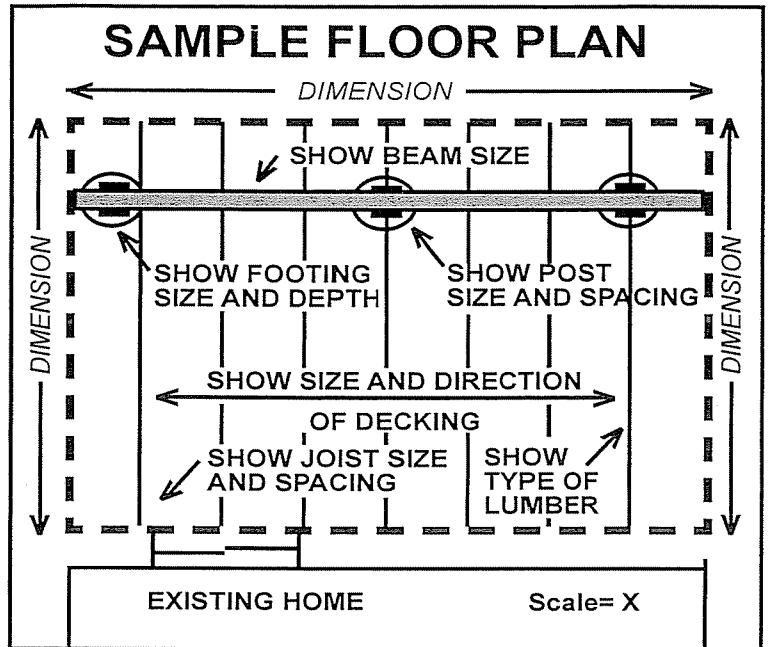
Certificate of Survey or Site Plan drawn to scale indicating the lot dimensions, the location and size of the existing structure(s), and the location and a size of the proposed structure. Indicate the setbacks from property lines of the existing and proposed structure(s). Including septic system area and wells if applicable.



DECKS *continued*

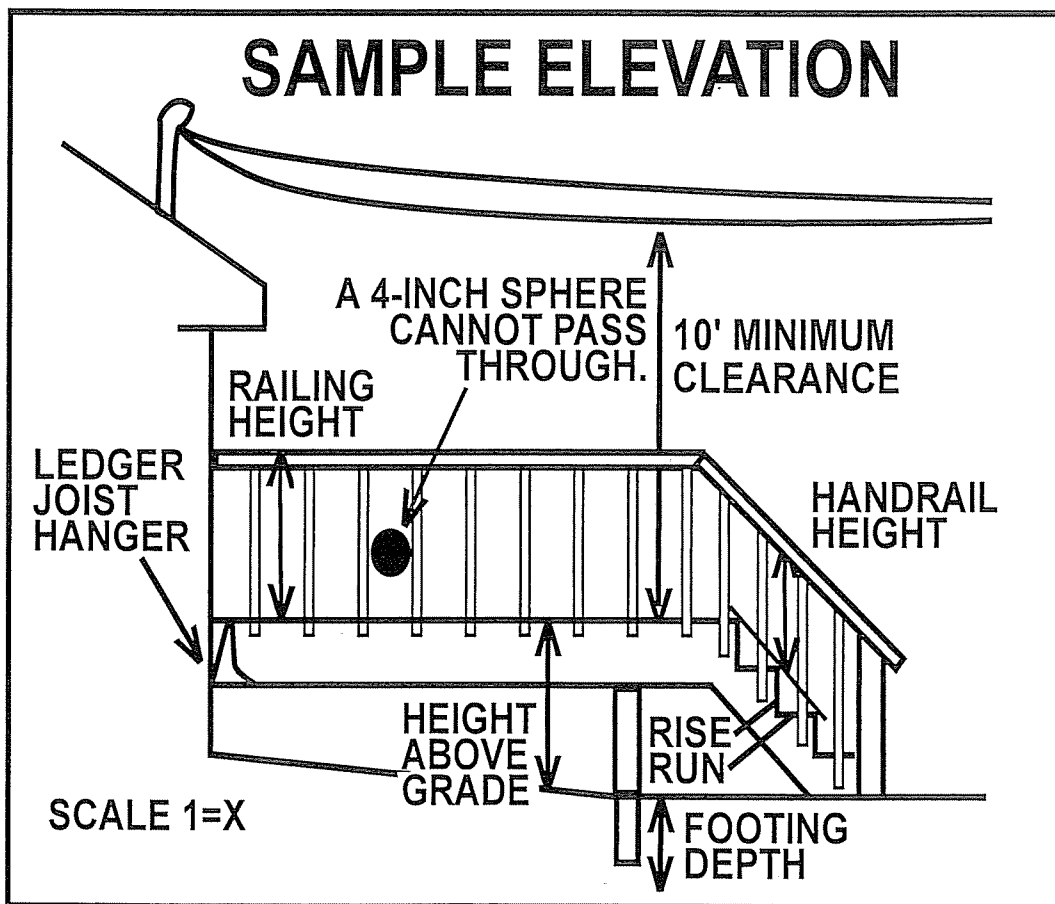
FLOOR PLAN

1. Proposed deck size.
2. Size and spacing of floor joists.
3. Size and type of decking material.
4. Size, type, location, and spacing of posts.
5. Size and type of beams.



ELEVATION PLAN

1. Height of structure from grade.
2. Size and depth of footings.
3. Guard height and spacing (if any).
4. Stairway rise/run and handrail height (if any).
5. Clearance of over-head wires (if applicable).



Call at least 2 full business days before you dig.
 1-651-454-0002 1-800-252-1156 www.gopherstateonecall.org

Contact your local building code official regarding specific code and permit requirements in your municipality or if you have any questions regarding information presented in this brochure.