



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

City of Farmington Hills

## REQUIREMENTS FOR WOOD DECK CONSTRUCTION

1. Building permits are required prior to constructing wood decks. When making application for a permit, please provide the following information:
  - A. Two (2) site plans that indicate the location of the deck (size and shape) and the distance from **property lines and easements**.
  - B. Two sets of working drawings that show structural details.
  - C. Completed building permit application.
  
2. **Minimum Required Inspections.**
  - A. Post hole inspection (size and depth).
  - B. Final Inspection (when all work is complete).
  
3. **Footing (post holes) and Framing** Posts are to be set a minimum of 42" below grade or to virgin soil if necessary. Spacing of posts must provide adequate structural support. Joist spacing and span lengths must provide adequate structural support. Post and joist location and size must be noted on the drawings. Ledger boards against brick veneer must be through bolted to the rim joist with a minimum ½" bolt spaced not greater than 24" apart. Beams must be bolted to posts or rest on top of posts using a galvanized metal connector. Joists that attach to the sides of beams or ledger boards must be secured with appropriately sized joist hangers. Finished grade under and around the deck must slope away from the deck and house and provide positive drainage.
  
4. **Setbacks from Property Lines** Wood decks cannot encroach upon any easement, right-of-way, or the minimum setback required by the zoning ordinance.
  
5. **Framing Material** All wood exposed to the weather must be pressure treated or of a naturally durable species (redwood, cedar, etc.). All wood in contact with the ground must be labelled "Ground Contact".

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Planning Office  
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Zoning and Code Enforcement  
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6. **Framing Fasteners** All nails, bolts less than 1/2" in diameter, screws, and nails shall be of zinc, zinc coated, stainless steel, galvanized, or other approved corrosion resistive material.
7. **Handrails and Guardrails** Handrails are required on stairs with three or more risers (two treads). Handrails are to be not less than 34" nor more than 38" in height measured vertically from the nosing of the treads. **Handrails must be graspable with a cross-sectional dimension not to exceed 2 5/8"**. Handrail ends shall be returned to the wall or post adjacent to the handrail. Guardrails are required on decks with the walking surface 30" or more above the adjacent grade. Guardrails are to be a minimum of 36" above the walking surface. Vertical enclosures (spindles) must be spaced so as to not allow the passage of a sphere 4" or more in diameter.
8. **Stairs** Stair risers must be no more than 8 1/4" in height and must be equal throughout the length of each stair. Stair treads must be at least 9" in depth with a 1" nosing. Tread depth shall be measured from nosing to nosing and must be equal throughout the length of each stair.
9. **Ground Cover** consisting of sheet plastic and stone/gravel is **recommended** under all decks.

**Skirting** When skirting is to be installed around the perimeter of the deck, the final approval must be obtained prior to the installation.