

Follow these 7 Steps . . .

1 Find out if your proposed deck will meet these placement, construction and safety requirements.

Placement

- ♦ Decks less than 3 feet above ground can extend up to the lot line in most cases.
- ♦ Decks 3 feet or higher above the ground must meet the zoning setback requirements for your district. Call 266-4560 for zoning requirements in your area.

Construction

- ♦ Use weather-resistant materials such as treated lumber.
- ♦ Footings must be adequate to support the load. Building Inspection staff will help you determine the type of footing to use.
- ♦ Footings for decks must be at least 48 inches deep to prevent frost heaving.

Safety

- ♦ Guardrails must surround any deck that is more than 2 feet above ground and they must be a minimum of 3 feet high.
- ♦ Stairs of more than 3 risers require handrails with intermediate rails, balustrades or latticework spaced so that a four-inch ball cannot pass through.

2 Obtain a building permit. A building permit is required for all decks.

3 Turn in your required drawings at the Building Inspection Permit Counter.

- ♦ If your deck is over 3 feet high a drawing showing your deck's location, size and distance from lot lines and other structures will be needed.
- ♦ All decks require construction drawings showing the deck size, post locations, beam sizes, and joist size and spacing.

4 Wait for staff to review your plans. For decks, your plans can be reviewed and a permit issued by City staff immediately if the design meets the required codes.

5 Pay the fee and receive your permit. The City charges for building permits to cover the cost of plan review and inspections.

The permit fee for most decks under 420 square feet is \$35. Staff will calculate your exact fee once they have approved your plans. A fee schedule is available at the Permit Counter.

6 Start the work that the permit was issued for. Be sure to display the permit where it can be seen from the street during construction.

7 Call for an inspection. When your permit is issued the Permit Counter staff will tell you the name and phone number of the Building Inspector for your area. The Building Inspector will work with you to be sure the work is done correctly.

It is your responsibility to schedule an inspection after your footing holes are dug and before the footings are installed.

On-site inspections of your project during construction assure you that the materials used and the work done are up to code. If any work does not pass inspection, it must be corrected and reinspected. At any time during the planning or construction of your deck, call, write or visit Building Inspection. They're happy to answer your questions and suggest solutions to your problems.

Mailing Address

City of Madison
Building Inspection Unit
P.O. Box 2984
Madison, WI 53701-2984

Phone Number

(608) 266-4551

Web Address

www.cityofmadison.com/planning/bi/bihome.htm

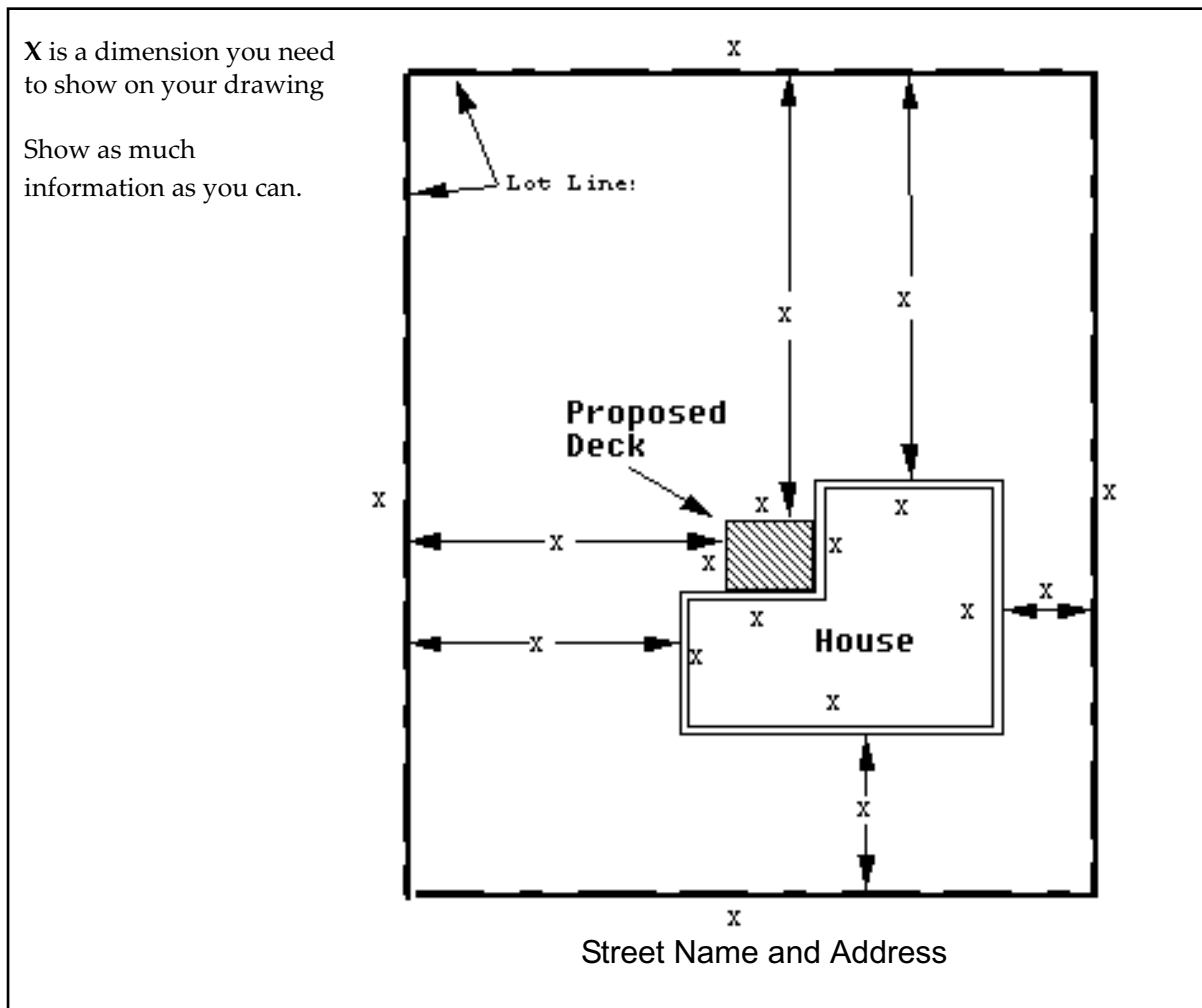
E-mail

bldginspect@cityofmadison.com

Smart Builder Tips

- Not all pressure treated (green or brown) lumber is rated for ground contact. Foundation posts must be suitable for ground contact.
- Paint end surfaces of treated lumber. Pressure treatment only penetrates the lumber about 1/4 inch. Cut lumber exposes untreated surfaces which could rot quickly.
- Slope the ground under the deck to direct water away from the house and to prevent ponding. A slope of one inch in one foot is recommended.
- Install decking with wood grain curving down. The edge will look like a rainbow. This prevents cupping or warping of the lumber.
- Use galvanized screws to avoid rust streaking and for greater stability.
- Call Diggers Hotline 1-800-242-8511 before digging any post holes.

Site Plan Example



- Dispose of scraps of treated lumber with your garbage. Don't burn it! Some types of treated lumber contain arsenic.
- Not all deck kits meet building code.

Check with Building Inspection before you buy a kit.

Decks

