

Decks



Follow these 6 Steps

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

Placement

- Decks fewer 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 266-4551 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 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 need handrails with intermediate rails, balustrades, or latticework spaced so that a four-inch ball cannot pass through.

2 Turn in your required drawings and obtain a building permit at the Building Inspection Permit Counter. A building permit is required for all decks.

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, joist size and spacing, and footing size.

3 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.

4 Pay the fee and receive your permit

The City charges for building permits to cover the cost of plan review and inspections.

5 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.

6 Call for an inspection. When your permit is issued the Permit Counter staff will give you the contact info for your inspector. The inspector will work with you to be sure the work is done correctly.

It's your responsibility to schedule inspections for footings, framing, and a final.

The framing and final may be done together as long as the framing below the decking will be visible at the final inspection. Finals include installed railings, if applicable. On-site inspections of your project during construction make sure that the materials and the work 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, email or visit Building Inspection. We're happy to answer your questions and suggest solutions to your problems.

For More Information



City of Madison
Building Inspection Division
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
P.O. Box 2984
Madison, WI 53701-2984
(608) 266-4551; Fax: (608) 266-6377
[www.cityofmadison.com/developmentcenter/
bldginspect@cityofmadison.com](http://www.cityofmadison.com/developmentcenter/bldginspect@cityofmadison.com)

Smart Builder Tips

- Paint end surfaces of treated lumber. Pressure treatment only penetrates the lumber about ¼ 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 at 811 or 1-800-242-8511, before digging any post holes or visit www.diggershotline.com.
- Dispose of scraps of treated lumber with your garbage.
- Not all deck kits meet building code. Check with Building Inspection before you buy a kit.

State Building Code

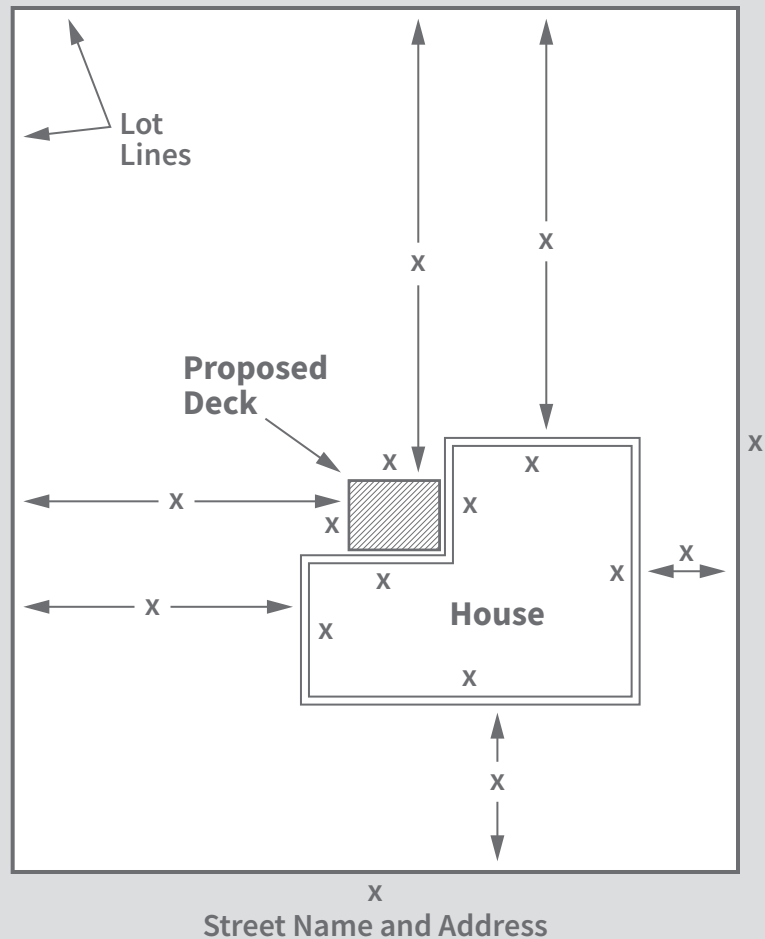
Below are web links for the State Building Code Deck Appendix B and C. Appendix B includes all information needed to build a quality deck and Appendix C contains additional sizing charts and attachment information.

- [Appendix B](#)
- [Appendix C](#)

Site Plan Example

X is a dimension you need to show on your drawing.

Show as much information as you can.



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