

### **What is the difference between guardrails and handrails?**

Guardrails are intended to prevent persons from falling off the edge of stairs or a raised floor area, therefore, they must be able to withstand the pressure of a human body and be non-climbable. Guardrails are needed for any deck that is more than 600mm (2ft) above the finished ground level. If the deck is more than 600mm (2ft) but less than 1.8m (6ft) the guardrails must be 900mm (35in) high. Any deck more than 1.8m (6ft) above the finished ground level the guardrails must be 1070mm (42in) in height.

Regardless of the height of the guardrail, the spacing between rails remains the same, a maximum opening of 100mm (4in) non-climbable. Stairs which have more than three risers (steps) or which exceed 600mm (2ft) above the finished ground level require guardrails as well.

Handrails are required to assist persons using the stairs. If any outside stair has more than three risers (steps) a handrail is required on both sides of the stairway.

### **Are there any requirements for stairs?**

The Building Code requires that treads and risers have uniform rise and run in any flight with riser heights not exceeding 200mm (7 7/8in). As well, the minimum run of each tread must be 210mm (8 1/4in) and the minimum tread width to be 235mm (9 1/4in). Contact a building inspector for more specific information regarding stairs

### **How do I deal with overhead power lines or gas and hydro meters?**

If you plan to build a deck beneath overhead power supply conductors, a clearance of 3.5m (11ft 6in) must be maintained between the deck surface and the conductors. If the deck is to be installed beneath a hydro meter, it may be necessary to relocate the meter to maintain the proper meter height. For more information contact Manitoba Hydro/Centra Gas at 727-1486 and/or MTS at 611. Gas meter and/or gas shut off cannot be located under a deck.



## Contact Us

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### Office Hours

Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Please call between 8:30 am and  
9:30 am to book inspections.

### Building Inspector

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# Planning, Property & Buildings

# Building a Deck

### **Do I require a building permit for building a deck?**

Yes, a building permit is required when building a deck or replacing all or a portion of an existing deck. The building permit may be applied for at the planning office (421-9th Street).

### **What if the deck is not attached to my house?**

A building permit is required to be obtained whether the deck is attached or free standing. A deck is a raised unenclosed platform usually supported on a foundation of surface pads or piles.

### **What information do I have to bring with me when applying for a building permit?**

- A well-drawn site plan (see "What is a Site Plan") which can be drawn on a copy of a surveyor's Building Location Certificate; and
- Construction and elevation plans complete with a cut through of the finished deck is sufficient (see "What is a Cut Through")

### **What is a Site Plan?**

A site plan is a drawing, no larger than 11x17, showing where you plan your project in relation to lot line and other structures on site. The site plan should be drawn to scale and should include the following:

- Property lines and dimensions
- Distance to existing buildings
- Placement of proposed structure
- Length, width, and height of new structure
- Distance from property lines for existing buildings
- Distance from property lines for proposed structure
- All adjacent streets and lanes
- Location of utilities, ie overhead lines, shut-offs
- North arrow
- Address and/or legal description

### **Where can I build my deck?**

Assuming that you are building your deck on an interior lot (an interior lot has lots on both sides) in a single-family area, the following outlines where a deck may be built and the space requirements for doing so:

Front Yard	Terraces must be at least 0.6m (2ft) from property line Decks are not permitted
Side yard	Terraces and decks must be at least 0.6m (2ft) from property line
Rear Yard	Terraces and decks must be at least 0.6m (2ft) from property line

### **What is a cut through?**

A cut through is a picture of what the structure would look like if one took a chain saw and cut the structure in half so that you could see exactly what building materials were used in the construction.

### **What do the construction and elevation plans indicate?**

Construction plans must show:

- Size of the deck
- Size and spacing of the beams, posts, and floor joists
- Species and grade of material being used
- Foundation you have chosen to support the deck
- Location of any stairs leading to or from the deck

Elevation plans must show:

- Height of the deck floor above finished ground level (highest point)
- Height and type of guardrail being used

### **What types of foundations are normally used for wood decks (free standing or fastened to rim joist)?**

In general, the foundation chosen for a wood deck consists of either surface pads or concrete piles or piers.

Surface pads – Decks are permitted to be supported on concrete deck blocks if all of the following criteria has been satisfied:

- The deck is not over 1.2m (4ft) in height above finished grade to top of platform (walking surface).
- The deck is not over 55sq.m. (592 sq.ft) in area
- The deck does not support a roof that is attached.
- The guard rail must remain 50mm (2") clear of the structure

Concrete piles or piers – Piles or piers are required to be used when the conditions for surface pads are exceeded or they may be used at any time as an alternative to surface pads.

### **What size posts should I use to support my deck and how should they be anchored?**

Posts, if used, should be at least the width of the beam, centered on the pad, pile, or pier, and securely fastened to the beam by means of toenailing, wood gussets, angle brackets, or other equivalent method. Where the deck is more than 1.8m (6ft) above finished grade a 6"x6" post is required to be used. Where posts exceed 1.8m (6ft) in length, they should be braced to each other or up to the beam and floor or, alternatively, they should be anchored to the pad, pile, or pier in order to prevent them from shifting at the bottom.