

## **DECK REQUIREMENTS**

### **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.

The Building Inspector will need a number of items. These 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 Building Inspector can be reached at (320) 253-2171.

### **REQUIRED INSPECTIONS**

1. Footings: after the holes are dug, but **PRIOR TO THE POURING OF CONCRETE!**
2. Final: to be made upon completion of the deck and finish grading.

### **SETBACKS**

Setbacks from property lines vary depending upon the zoning district your home is located in. Generally the distance is 20' from the rear yard and 10' from the side yard. Some neighborhoods have covenants restricting the size and location of decks. Check the abstract for the property to learn if any covenants are in place.

### **GENERAL BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS**

- a. Footings must extend to frost depth of 42" (top of grade to bottom of footing).
- 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 a 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

As of January 1, 2004, EPA will not allow CCA products to be used to treat wood intended for any of these residential uses. This transition affects virtually all residential use of wood treated with chromated copper arsenate; also know as CCA, including wood used in play-structures, decks, picnic tables, landscaping timbers, residential fencing, and boardwalks.

Recent changes have been made in the chemicals used in the manufacture of pressure-treated wood. Chromated copper arsenate, also know 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 for outdoor use are considerably more corrosive than those previously treated with CCA and therefore require special fastener, 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 instruction for the hardware. Questions should be directed to your wood and fastener supplier.

- 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 rail not less than 36" in height. Open guard and stair railings require intermediate rails of an ornamental pattern such that a sphere 4" 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 riser (height) and a 9 inch minimum tread (length). The largest tread rise and tread run may not exceed the smallest corresponding tread rise or run by more than 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 1/4" or more than 2 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 of 10 feet above decks and platforms. Existing line may need to be raised if a new deck is to be installed beneath them.
- j. Outside meters, sprinklers. When locating a deck, care must be given to the location of existing gas and electric meters. These may need to be relocated to allow for construction of the deck. An alternative location for the deck may be necessary if the location interfere with these devices. Check with the utility company for clearances.
- k. Outside water meter readers. Outside water meter reader device 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 the City Water Department at (320) 253-2171 to obtain information and procedures on relocating these devices.

#### **PLANS: SITE, FLOOR AND ELEVATION**

The following text and sample drawings show the minimum detail required so the permit process can proceed smoothly. 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. Include PIN# (property identification number) on the permit application (this may be found on the property tax statement).

Certificate of Survey or Site Plan drawn to scale indicating the lot dimensions, the location and size of the existing structure(s), the location and the size of the proposed structure is required. Indicate the setbacks from property lines of the existing and proposed structure (s) including easements.