

### Do you need a permit?

Yes, in most cases a permit to construct a deck will be required. Always check with your permit issuing authority to determine permit requirements essential to your project before you begin.

### How do I get a permit?

If you are not sure where to get the required permits for projects in your area, please contact Municipal Affairs using the contact information in this brochure to find out more.

### What are the benefits of getting a permit?

- You have access to the expertise of certified safety codes officers (inspectors), who will help you comply with the Alberta Building Code.
- Your plans will be reviewed by a certified safety codes officer to identify potential problems. This will allow you to make changes in the plans stage rather than having to make costly corrections after construction.
- Inspections will be carried out by certified safety codes officers, who will provide you with inspection reports and follow-up with you on any outstanding deficiencies related to the Alberta Building Code.

### Safety measures

Doors opening onto a residential wood deck must be mechanically secured to prevent access until handrails and guards are installed, if they are required by the building code.

### Required Plans

You must submit plans with your building permit application to your local authority before starting any construction.

The plans may include any or all of the following:

- Site plan
- Cross-section
- Deck floor plan

*see inside the brochure for more information on these plans.*

## Alberta's Safety System

Alberta Municipal Affairs works in partnership with the Safety Codes Council, municipalities, corporations, agencies, and other organizations to deliver effective community-focused public safety programs and services to Albertans.

### Questions or more information:

#### Alberta Municipal Affairs

Safety Services Branch  
16th Floor, Commerce Place  
10155 - 102 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4

Phone toll-free: 1-866-421-6929  
Fax: 780-427-8686  
E-mail: [safety.services@gov.ab.ca](mailto:safety.services@gov.ab.ca)  
[www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca](http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca)

#### Safety Codes Council

Suite 1000, 10665 - Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3S9

Toll-free within Alberta:  
Phone: 1-888-413-0099  
Fax: 1-888-424-5134  
[www.safetycodes.ab.ca](http://www.safetycodes.ab.ca)

Please place your agency or municipality contact information in the space below.

These brochures may be updated periodically. They have no legal status and cannot be used as an official interpretation of the various bylaws, codes and regulations currently in effect.

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# Safety Tips

## Building a wood deck



Alberta



# Building a wood deck

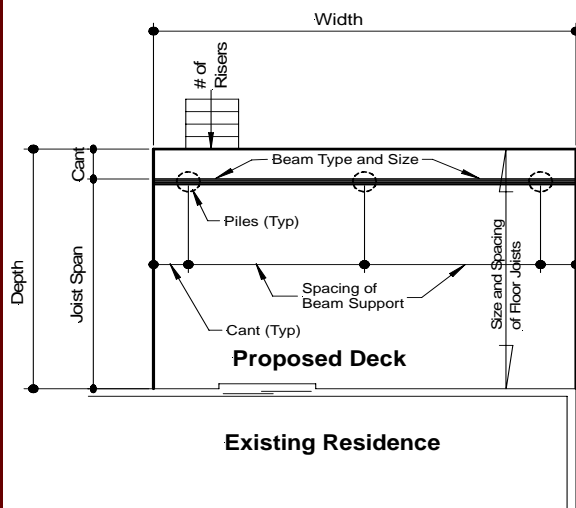
## Site plan (required information)

- Show north with an arrow and indicate the size of the property through proper dimensioning.
- Indicate distances from the deck to property lines and to any existing buildings on site.
- Show location of deck steps (if any).

## Deck floor plan (required information)

- Indicate deck size (length, width and height) through proper dimensioning.
- Provide deck layout, indicating the joist direction on the plan as well as size, spacing of joists and span between joist supports.
- Show size, location and height of columns.
- Specify beam size.
- Show the type of foundation and depth below grade.
- Describe the location, size and depth of piles (if any).
- Provide details of stairs (if any). For example, the width, height, rise, run, handrails, etc.

## Deck floor plan illustration



## Guardrail protection

Open sides of a deck must be protected by a guardrail on each side not protected by a wall:

- for the length where there the elevation is more than 600 mm (24") between the deck and ground; or
- if the adjacent ground, within 1.2 m (47") of the deck, has a severe slope.

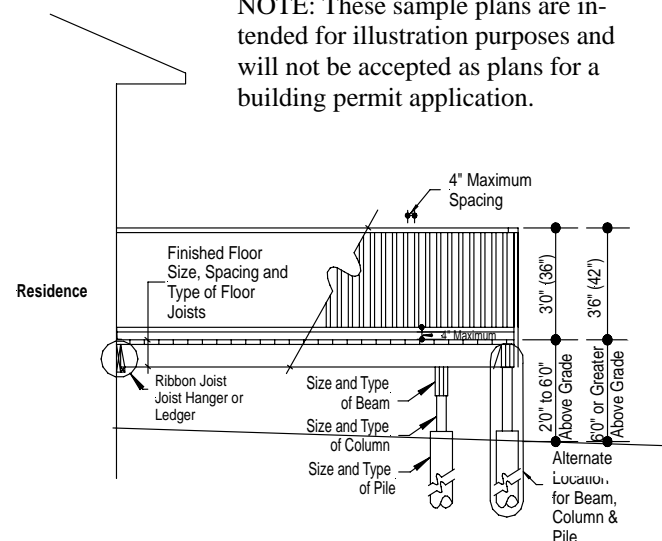
Openings in guards in all non-industrial buildings shall be small enough that a spherical object with a diameter of 100 mm (4") won't fit through.

Guardrails must be designed so no part, including ornamental fixtures, will facilitate climbing. There are specific code guidelines to ensure this requirement is met.

Guardrails must be at least 1.07 m (42") high, from the deck surface to the top of the guardrail. Guardrails serving one home can be 0.9 m (3') high if the deck surface is not more than 1.8 m (6') above the ground.

## Cross-section illustration

NOTE: These sample plans are intended for illustration purposes and will not be accepted as plans for a building permit application.



## Surface foundations

If your deck is built on a foundation that is supported on a surface other than rock or coarse-grained soil with good drainage, access to the foundation for re-leveling shall be provided:

- by passageways with a clear height under the deck of at least 600 mm (24") and a width of at least 600 mm (24"); or
- by installing the deck surface in a way that allows easy removal.

## Weight support requirements

Decks must be designed to hold a 1.9 kPa (40 lb/sq. ft.) load. They must be able to support the load in addition to the weight of the deck itself.

## Clearances to Overhead Power Lines

Wood decks beneath overhead power lines must maintain a minimum 3.5 m vertical clearance. Consult with your Electrical Utility regarding distances between metering and deck surfaces.

## Subsurface foundation requirements

- The foundation system must be at least 1.2 m (4') below grade and extend at least 150 mm (6") above grade.
- Wood piles must be treated with an acceptable preservative to at least 300 mm (12") above ground level.
- Footings are not required under piles if the safe load-bearing capacity of the soil is not exceeded. Your safety codes officer may require additional verification.

NOTE: Concrete pile design is not provided in the Alberta Building Code and may require the seal and signature of a Professional Engineer.

This will be determined by the safety codes officer issuing permits in your area.