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RESIDENTIAL DECKS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As a homeowner may I apply for a building permit and build my own deck?

Yes, you file a homeowner affidavit form along with your building permit application and the department will issue you the building permit, once the application has been approved.

Do you expect the homeowner to meet the same code requirements as a licensed residential builder?

Yes, the State Residential Building Code is a minimum code standard. Failure to meet the minimum code standards is the responsibility of the permit applicant.

Since the homeowner is the person who will be using the deck, shouldn't they be able to decide if they need to meet the code standards?

No, the building code is a minimum code standard that is designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public.

What do I need to provide with my building permit application?

- 1) *Construction drawings for decks must include the following information:*
 - a) *lumber grade and species*
 - b) *beam sizes & spans*
 - c) *joist sizes & spans*
 - d) *deck attachment & flashing detail*
 - e) *height of the deck above grade*
 - f) *footing locations*
 - g) *post and footing details*
 - h) *guardrail detail*
 - i) *stair rise and tread depth*
 - j) *stair nosing and handrail details*

- 2) *Site Plans*
- 3) *Washtenaw County Health Department approval form or wavier form if your home use's a well or septic field.*
- 4) *Homeowner association approval **if required.***

Two copies of 1 and 2 are required with one set being no larger than 11"X 17".

How long does it take to process a building permit?

*The average processing time is seven to ten **business** days. The applications are reviewed in the order that they are received. **Please remember the old saying, "don't let your lack of planning become our emergency".***

Will someone call me when my permit is ready?

If time permits, the office staff will call the applicant when the permit is ready. You are always welcome to call and check on the status of your permit.

When do I pay for the permit and how much will it cost?

The building permit is paid for when you pick it up. The cost of the permit is based on the improvement cost and a plan review fee. The improvement cost must include the cost of the materials and labor. If you are building the deck yourself you must assign a reasonable value to your labor. For example, a deck that cost \$5,000 would be charged \$50.00 for the permit fee and \$15.00 for the plan review for a total of \$65.00.

When can I get started on my deck?

*No work is to start until a permit has **been issued and paid for.***

Will you call MISS DIG?

No, the applicant is responsible to call MISS DIG prior to any excavating. There is a three day minimum notice-call 1-800-482-7171

How many inspections will I need?

Most decks require only two inspections:

- 1) A **footing** inspection is completed after the holes are dug and before any thing goes into the hole
- 2) A **final** inspection is required after the deck has been completed.

A rough inspection is required when the deck is located close to the ground (under 12")

My plan was approved and I built it just like the plan, can you still fail my deck at the time of inspection?

Yes, Section R105.4 of the 2000 Michigan Residential Code states "The issuance of a permit based on construction documents and other data shall not prevent the building official from requiring the correction of errors in the construction documents and other data".

How long is my permit good for?

According to Section R105.5 of the code book, every permit issued shall become invalid unless the work authorized by such permit is commenced within 180 days after its issuance, or if the work authorized by such permits is suspended or abandoned for a period of 180 days after the time the work is commenced.

Must I be home for the inspection?

No one is required to be present for a deck inspection, unless access to yard is locked or there is an animal present. The approved site copy of the plans are required to be available and the job card must be posted per the requirements listed on the back of the job card. A clear and safe access path must be provided to the deck.

NOTE: The disturbance of fresh grass seed or sod is the responsibility of the applicant.

Attached are pertinent Michigan Residential 2000 Code Sections

Any code questions can be answered by one of our Building Inspectors