



## RESIDENTIAL DECKS

The following requires a building permit, plans and zoning approval:	Permit	Zoning Approval	Plat	Plans
Build a new deck (1)	YES	YES	YES	YES
Replace an existing deck	YES	YES	YES	YES
Replacing structural members (beam, girder, guardrails)	YES	NO	NO	YES
Replace guardrails (2)	YES	NO	NO	NO
Replacing steps (if over 5 risers)	YES	NO	NO	NO
Deck is less than 16 inches from finished grade at all points (3)	YES (zoning)	YES	YES	NO
Concrete patio	NO	YES	YES	NO
Hot tubs and spas being placed on a deck (4)	YES	NO	NO	YES
Replacing more than 1 support post (plans required if like for like replacement)	YES	NO	NO	NO

The following may be done without a permit, plan or zoning approval:	Permit	Zoning Approval	Plat	Plans
Replacing balusters (pickets)	NO	NO	NO	NO
Replacing floor boards	NO	NO	NO	NO
Replacing Handrails	NO	NO	NO	NO
Adding new or replacing steps (5 or less risers)	NO	NO	NO	NO
Minor repairs such as replacing joist hangers, nails, bolts.	NO	NO	NO	NO
Replacing 1 support post like for like size	NO	NO	NO	NO

1. DCA 6 2015 version may be used in lieu of plans.
2. Guardrails are considered structural and is the most common part of a deck that structurally fails. Guardrails are often confused for “handrails”.
3. Decks less than 16 inches from finished grade are considered patios and therefore do not need a building permit, however a zoning permit is required. Decks that are less than 16 inches from grade do not require building inspections only a setback inspection from a zoning staff member.
4. An engineer design is required.
5. Deviations from DCA 6 are permitted if approved by the building inspector prior to the inspection. The Town uses DCA 6 as its guiding document

## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q. How deep must footers be?**

A. 24” to the bottom of the footer.

**Q. What are the required dimensions of my footer?**

A. Based on DCA 6 figure 12 table 4. Minimum diameter is 18” round or 16”x16” square.

**Q. What size post is allowed?**

A. 6”x 6” post is the minimum required post size.



**Q. Do I need to fill the entire hole with concrete?**

A. No, concrete thickness is based off DCA 6 figure 12 table 4. The minimum is 7”.

**Q. When is a guardrail required around my deck?**

A. Decks floor surfaces more than 30” above finished grade shall have guards 36” in height.

**Q. What is the spacing of balusters “pickets”?**

A. 4” on center.

**Q. What is the required handrail height?**

A. 34” minimum and 38” maximum measured from the nosing of the tread.

**Q. Can my deck be free standing?**

A. Yes.

**Q. Can my risers be open?**

A. Yes, open risers are permitted provided that the openings located more than 30 inches (763 mm), as measured vertically, to the floor or grade below do not permit the passage of a 4-inch-diameter (102 mm) sphere.

## REQUIRED DECK INSPECTIONS

1. Setback inspection performed by the zoning department.
2. Footing inspection prior to placement of concrete.
3. Ledger flashing for decks directly attached to the primary structure.
4. Framing and final inspections may be combined if all portions of the deck framing and mechanical attachments are at least 42” above grade.
5. Failure to receive any and all inspections can result in the issuance of violations which may lead to legal action.
6. It is the responsibility of the permit holder or the permit holder’s representative to notify the Town when the stages of construction are reached that require an inspection

## DECK CONSTRUCTION TIPS

1. All wood must be pressure treated or naturally resistant to decay. Cuts, holes and notches shall be treated.
2. All beams shall bear fully on a notched 6x6 or shall bear on top of the post by way of a post cap attachment.
3. Deck post over 2 feet in height should have diagonal bracing parallel to the beam at each corner.
4. Ledger attachment per Virginia Residential Code Table R507.2 or DCA 6 Table 5 and figure 19.
5. Guard post shall be attached with a hold down anchor per DCA 6 figure 26. Example Simpson DTT2Z.
6. Decks may not be attached to wood trusses without an engineered design.
7. Lateral load devices (deck tension tie) shall be used were decks are attached to the primary structure. Example Simpson DTT2Z or DTT1Z. (4) DTT1Z per deck (2) DTT2Z per deck.
8. Through bolts, lag screws, expansion and adhesive anchors shall be the method used to attach deck framing members.