

Building Decks in Single Family Zones

Building Department: 604-990-2480, building@dnv.org

Building Permit Application Process

1. Review the Zoning Bylaw, Building Bylaw and BC Building Code requirements. A summary of main issues is provided below;
2. Contact Development Services (building@dnv.org) to arrange submission of your completed building permit application. Refer to Building Permit Application Checklist: Addition / Deck 6'-6";
3. For a new single family dwelling or for an addition to an existing building, the Zoning Bylaw and Building Code provisions will be reviewed by a single family dwelling Plans Reviewer as part of the building permit process. An appointment can be scheduled for information only prior to submitting an application;
4. The building permit application is reviewed and a building permit issued after fees and refundable security deposits have been paid;
5. Owner and/or contractor request inspections during construction as required.

Zoning Bylaw Requirements for Decks

1. Decks **less** than 2 ft (600 mm) in height and detached decks **less** than 108 sq.ft. (10m²) in area do not require a building permit;
2. A building permit is required for a deck **detached** from the house where the deck is **higher than 2 ft.** (600 mm). The deck must be sited according to the requirements for accessory buildings and structures;
3. A building permit is required for a deck higher than 2 ft. (600 mm) that is **attached** to a house and must be sited according to the requirements for the principal building (including exemptions per Section 409(2) of the Zoning Bylaw;
4. Decks attached to the house that are greater than 2 ft. (600 mm) are also included in the Building Coverage calculation;
5. Decks attached to the main dwelling and are greater than 6'-6" (1981 mm) are included in Floor Space Ratio.

Building Bylaw/Code Requirements for Decks

(Note: It is the owner's responsibility to comply with Section 9.8 of the BCBC 2024 for Stairs, Ramps, Handrails and Guards)

1. As per the BC Building Code 2024, Sentence 9.8.8.3.(3), a guard that is no less than 36" (900mm) in height is required for all decks greater than 2 ft above grade (9.8.8.1.(1));
2. As per the BC Building Code 2024, Sentence 9.8.8.3.(1), a guard that is a minimum of 42" (1070 mm) in height is required for all decks greater than 6ft. (1800mm) above grade;
3. As per BC Building Code 2024, an owner must ensure that guards required by Article 9.8.8.1 comply with; Sentence 9.8.8.5.(1) Openings through any guards shall prevent the passage of a spherical object having a diameter of 4" (100 mm) and Sentence 9.8.8.6.(1)&(2) no member, attachment or opening will facilitate climbing; has no climbable members between 5.5" (140 mm) and 36" (900 mm);

4. All stairs must conform to Subsections 9.8.2., 9.8.3. and 9.8.4.;
5. A slip-resistant finish is required on all exterior stairs (excluding concrete), see Sentence 9.8.9.6.(2) of BCBC 2024;
6. As per BC Building Code 2024, Sentence 9.8.7.1.(3) a handrail is required at all steps where there are four or more risers. Sentence 9.8.7.4.(2) Height of handrails shall be not less than 34" (865 mm) not more than 42" (1070 mm) measured vertically, above the nosing of the treads;
7. All guard rails must have a top cap according to APEG BC Guidelines.

Fiberglass deck membrane is NOT permitted.

All metal fasteners must meet industry standard for compatibility with treated wood.

All exterior deck membranes must meet or surpass roofing material standards.