

City of South St. Paul
Building Inspections
Phone: 651-554-3220 • Fax: 651-554-3211

Decks

A building permit is required for all decks. Listed below are the requirements that need to be met in order to receive a building permit.

Requirements:

- **Permit Application:** Applications are available in our office or on our website.
- **Site Plan:** This will show property lines, existing buildings and the proposed deck location with distances to the property lines.
- **Construction Plans (2 sets):** Plans must include the following information:
 - Size of deck
 - Size and depth of footings
 - Size, location and spacing of posts
 - Type and grade of lumber
 - Size of beams
 - Size and spacing of joists
 - Type of floor boards
 - Height of deck from established grade
 - Height and design of guardrail
 - Spacing of intermediate rails
 - Stairs (location and size)

Additional Information:

- Joists and beams must be of the proper size and spacing to support the load.
- Frost Footings - required for any deck attached to a structure that has frost footings. The minimum depth to the base of the footing is 42 inches.
- Live Load - All decks shall be designed to support a live load of 40 pounds per square foot.
- Guardrails - required on all decks more than 30 inches above grade. Guardrails on single-family homes shall be a minimum height of 36 inches. Open guardrails and stair railings must have intermediate rails or an ornamental pattern spaced such that a four-inch sphere cannot pass through.
- Cantilevers (overhanging joists & beams) - joists should not overhang beams by more than two feet, nor should beams overhang posts by more than one foot unless a special design is approved.
- Flashing - all connections between deck and dwelling shall be weatherproof. Any cuts in exterior finish shall be flashed.
- Framing Details - Header beams more than 6 feet long and joists over 12 feet long that frame into ledgers or beams shall be supported by approved framing anchors, such as joist hangers.

- Posts - 4" x 4" - up to 4 feet
4" x 6" - from 4 to 6 feet
6" x 6" - 6 feet & above
- Nails & Screws - use only stainless steel, high strength aluminum, or hot-dipped galvanized.
- Wood Required - All exposed wood used in the construction of decks is required to be of natural resistance to decay (redwood, cedar, etc.) or approved treated wood. This includes posts, beams, joists, decking and railing.
- Stairs - minimum width is 36 inches. Maximum rise is 7 3/4 inches; minimum rise is 4 inches. Minimum run is 10 inches. Largest tread width or riser height shall not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8 inch.
- Handrails - The top shall be placed 34-38 inches above the nosing of the treads. Stairways having four or more risers shall have a least one handrail. Handrail ends shall be returned or terminated in posts. The handgrips shall not be less than 1 1/2 inches or more than 2 inches in cross-sectional dimension or the shape shall provide an equivalent gripping surface. The handrail shall have a smooth surface with no sharp corners.
- Special Design Note - some deck designs may not be appropriate should the placement of a screen porch or three-season porch on the deck platform be a future consideration.
- Gopher One - prior to digging call Gopher Services at 651-454-0002 to verify underground utility locations.

Inspections Required:

- Footing Inspection - After the holes are dug and prior to pouring of concrete.
- Framing Inspection
- Final

Where Do I Come To Obtain A Permit?

- Building Permit Department
City of South St. Paul
125 3rd Avenue North
South St. Paul, MN 55075

Questions?

- Contact our office Monday - Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 651-554-3220.