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Decks, Landings and Ramps

What you need to know before you build a deck, landing or ramp on your property

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Application Requirements

Your deck must comply with all zoning and building code requirements. This brochure is intended as a guide to assist you with understanding those requirements. If you require further information and guidance, please contact the department directly.

You will need to submit the following information with your completed building permit application:

- Site plan showing the proposed deck and distances to property lines
- Drawing how the deck will be constructed
- Details of the foundation supports and spacing
- Joist materials, sizes, span, spacing, and projections
- Beam material, size and spans
- Guardrail materials and heights

Please see Figure 1 and 2 for example site plans.

Figure 1: Example Site Plan

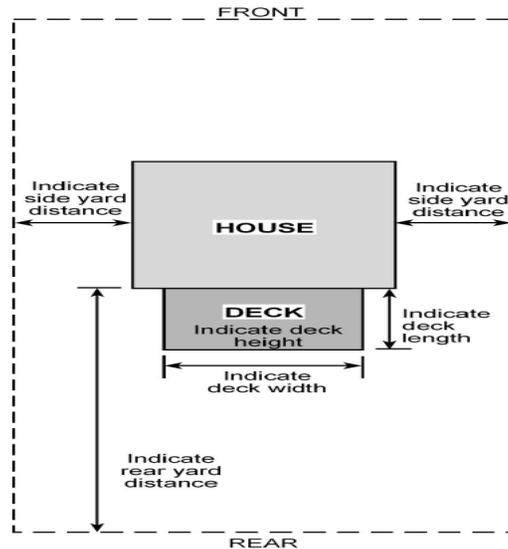
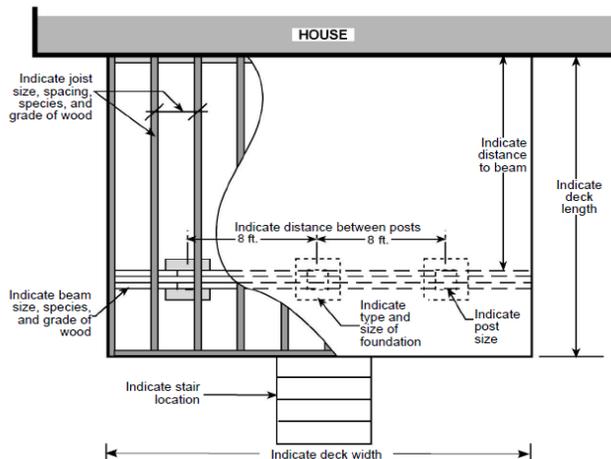


Figure 2: Example Site Plan—Deck



Wheelchair Ramp Handrails

Wheelchair Ramp Handrails

Handrails are required on all ramps.

Handrails shall:

- Be located not less than 865mm and not more than 965mm above the surface of the ramp.
- Have a clearance of not less than 50mm to the wall to which they are fastened, or 60mm if surface behind is rough or abrasive.
- Be continuously graspable along their entire length with a circular cross section of 30-43mm outside diameter or any non circular shape with 100-125mm perimeter and largest cross-sectional dimension not more than 45mm.
- Be terminated in a manner such as a return to the wall or post which will not obstruct pedestrian travel or create a hazard.
- At least one handrail shall be continuously graspable throughout the length of the ramp including landings, except where interrupted by doorways or posts and changes in direction
- At least one handrail shall extend not less than 300 mm beyond the top and bottom of ramp
- A ramp shall have handrails on both sides. Guards shall be located on each side
- Handrails and guards need to be designed to withstand the loads that are applied to them.

Figure 7: Door Swing & Minimum Platform

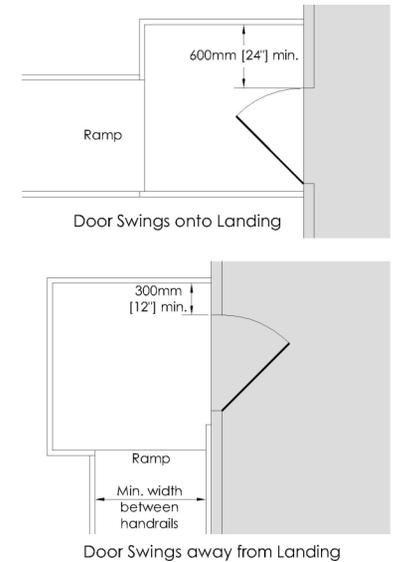
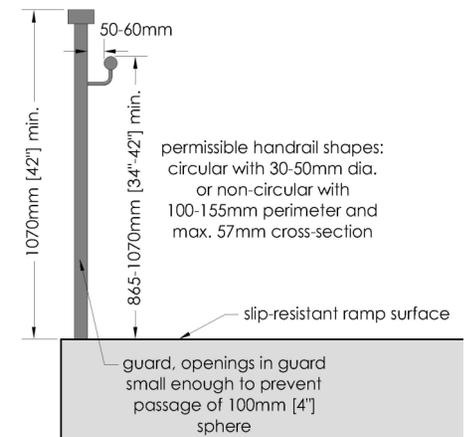


Figure 8: Handrail/Guardrail



Wheelchair Ramps and Lifts

Ramps are essential for people who require a wheelchair for mobility and are often preferred to stairs by people with other limitations or physical disabilities.

Wheelchair ramps require a building permit. Wheelchair lifts do not. Wheelchair ramps and wheelchair lifts may project into any required setback, but must be located on your property.

National Building Code Requirements

The following requirements for ramps are based on Section 3.8 of the National Building Code of Canada. These regulations set out where a barrier-free path of travel is required.

The following requirements apply to ramps in a barrier-free path of travel:

- Ramps must be used in barrier-free path of travel where floors or walks have slopes steeper than 1 in 20 or where there is a change in floor level of more than 13mm.
- Ramps shall have a minimum width of not less than 870mm between handrails.
- Ramps shall have a maximum slope of 1 in 12. Since gradients of 1 in 20 are safer and less strenuous, use of the maximum slope of 1 in 12 should be avoided in favour of a more gentle grade except when limited space is available.
- Level landings of not less than 1500mm by 1500mm must be provided at the top and bottom of the ramp.
- Intermediate level landings that are 1200mm long and at least the same width as the ramp are required, at intervals of not more than 9m or where there is an abrupt change in the direction of the ramp.
- If a door opens onto a top, bottom or intermediate landing, the level area shall extend not less than 600mm beyond the latch side of the door. If a door opens away from a top, bottom or intermediate landing, the level area shall extend not less than 300mm beyond the latch side of the door.
- Every ramp shall have a wall or well secured guard on each side.
- The height of guards shall be not less than 1070mm above the surface of the ramp or landing.
- Openings through a guard shall not be more than 100mm.
- No member, attachment or opening located between 140 and 900mm, 4.2m above the surface of the ramp shall facilitate climbing.

General Requirements

Decks Higher than 2 Feet

A building permit is required for decks that are higher than 600mm (2') above ground level, and not bigger than 55m² (592ft²), or any deck which supports an enclosed structure with a roof. Regardless of whether or not the deck is attached to the house or any other structure on the property, a building permit is required. All enclosed decks require a building permit.

Side Yard Setbacks

Decks higher than 600mm (2') must meet the setbacks requirements in the Zoning Bylaw. Side yard setbacks change depending on the zone the property is located in. Please see the City's zoning map available at www.citypa.ca for more information or contact Planning & Development Services for more information. Side yard setback are the same as the dwelling in the zone they are constructed in.

Front & Rear Yard Setbacks

Front yard and rear yard setbacks to property lines must be 6m (20').

Decks Under 2 Feet

A building permit is not required for a deck less than 600mm (2'). Decks less than 600mm (2') can project into a front yard setback by 2m (6'-6"), and 3.6m (11'-10") in a rear yard setback, and to the property line in the side yard.

Landings

The maximum size for a landing that does not require a building permit is 2.23m²(24ft²).

Landings 2.23m²(24ft²) or smaller can project into any required setback by a maximum distance of 1.2m(4') but has to be completely on your property.

Landings that are higher than 600mm(2') are required to be constructed with guardrails and handrails.

A BUILDING PERMIT IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION



Guardrails are intended to prevent people from falling off the edge of a stair or a raised floor area such as a deck. The guardrail must be able to withstand the pressure of a person leaning against it, and must be continuous around the deck surface. Handrails are required to assist people in ascending or descending stairs. They offer a continuous handhold to support people who may stumble on the stair.

Guardrails

Guardrails are only required on decks that are more than 600mm (2') above finished ground level and openings must be less than 100mm (4") apart (to prevent children from accidentally getting their head stuck in the guard).

Guardrails shall not be less than 900mm (3') high where the deck is not more than 1800mm (6') above the finished ground level and 1070mm (42") high where the deck exceeds 1800mm (6') high.

Guardrails that protect a level more than 4.2m (14') above the adjacent level shall be designed to prevent any climbing.

Figure 3:
Guardrails for decks under 6 feet

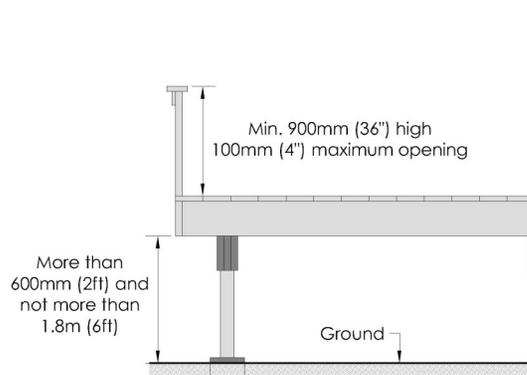
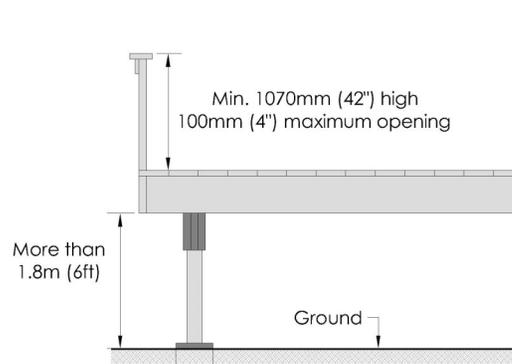


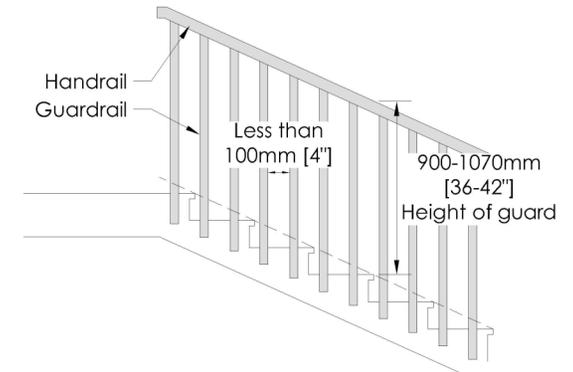
Figure 4:
Guardrails for decks over 6 feet



Guardrails on Stairs

Guardrails are required on stairs where there is a difference in elevation of more than 600mm (2') to finished ground level. The height of guards for flights of steps shall be 900mm (3') and constructed the same as guards for decks.

Figure 5: Handrail/Guardrail



Handrails on Stairs

Handrails are required on one side of the stairs if there is more than three (3) steps. The handrail is to be located between 865mm (34") and 1070mm (42") in height measured vertically from the top of the handrail to a straight line drawn through the tips of the nosing of the stair.

Built in Benches as Guardrails

Built in benches can be used as a guardrail if it is meeting the previously described height and opening requirements is provided above the flat surface of the bench and any openings below the bench also meet the maximum opening requirements.

Figure 6:
Bench Option

