

DECKS AND COVERED PORCHES



- Permits are required for a deck, balcony or any other raised floor surface 30" above grade, measured from the lowest point within five feet of the structure.
- Permit costs are based on the value of the project.
- A site plan is required when you apply for this permit. The site plan must show the location of the deck or porch on the property and distance from lot lines.
- Determining the location of lot lines is the responsibility of the homeowner/contractor.
- **GAS & ELECTRIC METERS CANNOT BE COVERED.** Consumers Energy must have access to the meters, shutoff and underground supply going into the home. If Consumers Energy has to do a repair or disconnect and the deck or porch is in the way, it will be removed and not replaced. Contact Consumers Energy at 800-477-5050 to request CES to do a site check before beginning your project.

INSPECTIONS

- Inspections shall be conducted on the footings, after the holes are dug and before posts are set.
- Additional inspections shall take place after the support structure is framed but before the decking is installed, and upon completion of the project.
- If the project has a roof, an additional inspection will be required for the ice guard.
- It is your responsibility to contact the City of Midland Building Department to schedule each inspection.

PROJECTION INTO YARD/SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

Decks that are not attached to the principle structure can be located in front, side and rear yards with the following restrictions:

- Such structure shall not be located closer than 10' from the front or street lot line
- Such structure shall not be located closer than 10' from the rear lot line
- Such structure shall not be located closer than 5' from the side lot line
- Such structure shall not be located closer than 6' from any accessory structure

Covered porches and attached decks increase the footprint of the principle structure. Therefore they must comply with the setback requirements for that zoning district. To determine your zoning district, either call the City of Midland Building Department or visit the City of Midland website: <http://www.midland-mi.org> and follow the Midland Property /Tax Information link.

Existing open porches located on the front of the home are allowed to be covered if the porch extends less than 6' from the home. These porches cannot be enclosed.

FASTENER REQUIREMENTS

- For pressure preservative treated lumber, above grade fasteners shall be of hot dipped galvanized steel, stainless steel, silicon bronze or copper.
- Below grade fasteners shall be stainless steel.
- Aluminum nails of any kind shall never be used in contact with treated lumber.

GUARD AND RAILING REQUIREMENTS

- Porches, balconies, or raised floor surfaces located more than 30" above a floor or grade shall have guards/railings not less than 36" in height.
- Porches and decks which are enclosed with insect screening shall be provided with guards/railings when the walking surface is located more than 30" above the floor or grade.
- All measurements for deck and walking surface height shall be taken from the lowest grade within 5' adjacent to the deck or walking surface.

FOUNDATION REQUIREMENTS

- Decks not supported or attached to dwellings and less than 30" above grade need not be supported by footings that extend below the frost line.
- Decks attached to the dwelling in any way must be supported by footings that extend below the frost line of 42".
- There are additional code requirements for dwelling-supported decks. Please contact the Building Department for details.
- A minimum 6" footing of hardened mixed concrete, pre-cast concrete cookie or other approved method must be placed in the bottom of a hole that has been mushroomed out and is flat in the bottom before the post foundation is set.
- Concrete mixes that are used to set the post foundations must be mixed with water and allowed to set before backfill. No dry mix is allowed.

FLASHING REQUIREMENTS

- Flashing shall be installed to prevent water penetration into the supporting wall cavity or into the building structural framing.
- Flashing is required where exterior porches, decks or stairs attach to a wall of floor assembly of wood frame construction.
- Flashing shall be made of an approved corrosion-resistant material.
- Aluminum flashing or trim shall not be in contact with pressure treated lumber.

STAIR/STEP REQUIREMENTS

- Stairways shall be a minimum of 36" wide.
- Handrails shall be provided on at least one side of each continuous run of treads or flight with 4 or more risers.
- Handrails shall be continuous for the full length of the flight.
- Handrails that run adjacent to walls shall be a minimum of 1.5" from the adjacent wall.
- Circular handrails shall have a cross-section dimension of at least 1.25" but not more than 2".
- Non-circular handrails shall have a total perimeter dimension (width) of 4" to 6.25". If larger than 6.25" they must have a graspable finger recess on both sides.
- Handrails on stairways are allowed to project into the 36" required width 4.5" on each side for a total allowable width at the height of the handrail of 31.5" for a handrail on one side and 27' for a handrail on both sides.
- Handrails must be a minimum height of 34" for stairs measured vertically from the nosing (front) of the step.
- Intermediate rails, spindles or ornamental closures are required and shall be spaced so that a 4" sphere cannot be passed through the opening.
- A 6" sphere must not be able to pass through the triangle opening formed by the stair riser, tread and bottom of handrail.

- Risers on steps must be a maximum of 8.25' high.
- No riser height dimension in a flight of stairs shall vary by more than 3/8".
- Stair treads must be a minimum of 9" deep.
- No tread depth in a flight of stairs shall vary by more than 3/8".
- Open risers are allowed, for stairs with a total rise of 30". The opening shall not allow the passage of a 4" sphere.
- Stairs with a total rise of less than 30" do not have the opening restriction.

DECK/HANDRAIL GUARD REQUIREMENTS

- Decks or walking surfaces higher than 30" above grade shall be provided with a guard.
- Deck handrails shall be a minimum of 36" in height.
- When the deck has attached seats, the guard height will be measured from the top of the seat.
- Intermediate rails, spindles or ornamental closures are required and shall be spaced so that a 4" sphere cannot be passed through the opening.

POOL DECKS

- Swimming pool decks have their own set of regulations which are somewhat more strict in nature because of the inherent danger associate with pools. The purpose of more stringent regulations is to protect and prevent a small child from gaining access and entry into an unattended pool. Pools require that a barrier of at least 48" surround the pool structure. If the sides of an above ground pool are at least 48", measured from the lowest grade within 5' adjacent to pool, the sides of the pool would satisfy this requirement.
- Guards/barriers must be a minimum of 48" in height.
- If guards are made up of horizontal and vertical members and the space between horizontal members is less than 45" the spacing between the vertical members shall not exceed 1.75".
- If the horizontal members are spaced greater than 45" the space between vertical members shall not exceed 4".
- Horizontal members must be located on the pool side of the railing. You do not want to create a ladder.
- Access gates shall open outward away from the pool and shall be self-closing and self-latching.
- Where the release mechanism of the self latching device is located within 54" of the bottom of the gate, the release mechanism shall be located on the pool side of the gate at least 3" below the top of the gate.
- The gate and barrier shall have no opening greater than 1/2" within 18" of the release.
- Decks on above ground pools cannot be closer than 10' to the property line.
- Please contact the City of Midland Building Department before installing any in-ground or above-ground pool with a water depth of greater than 24" for more safety requirements associated with pools.

The information presented in this handout is collected, maintained, and provided for the convenience of the reader as a guide. Please contact the City of Midland Building Department if you have any questions regarding the installation of decks and covered porches since specific codes or ordinances may affect your project.

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