

## ***Township of Lower Merion***

### **DECK REQUIREMENTS**

The following information has been prepared to provide you with a description of the documentation necessary to obtain a building permit for a deck. Before you submit the detailed plans referenced below, we recommend that you review the setbacks, impervious surface requirements and floodplain restrictions in your zoning district to determine whether your proposed deck will comply with the Lower Merion Township Zoning Code.

Submit a Residential Building Permit application along with the appropriate fee and a Site plan showing:

- current improvements (house, driveway, walkways, garage, patios, pavers, gravel areas, other decks, pools, etc) (all impervious surfaces)
- Impervious surface calculations (provide square footage of all hard surfaces other than grass and dirt) Impervious Surface Calculations form attached
- property lines and street(s)
- location of proposed deck
- distances from property lines to the deck
- location of any floodplain on the property
- location of any storm water and sewer easements
- location of any on-site sewer system (septic tank/cesspool and drain field)
- location of any stormwater management systems

Provide detailed drawings showing:

- plan view framing detail and cross sectional detail
- indicate size of lumber, lengths, widths, spans, on-center spacing, beam size, post size and distance between footings
- show size and depth of footings
- show method of anchoring deck to house and to footings
- show deck lateral load connection (see IRC Section R-502.2.2.3)
- show post to beam connections
- show stairs, handrails and railings

**NOTE:**

All contractors and sub-contractors must be currently licensed by Lower Merion Township or registered as a PA Home Improvement Contractor (HIC).

For deck that are 30 inches or more above grade:

- Guardrails must be a minimum of 36 inches above the adjacent walking surface
- When fixed seating is constructed adjacent to a guardrail, the 36 inch height requirement is measured from the fixed seat
- Maximum vertical spacing between uprights is 4 inches

Stairs must also comply with the guardrail requirements and, in some instances, must have handrails. Open stairs with four (r) or more risers require handrails and guardrails on both sides. Stairways with fewer than four (4) risers are not required to have handrails.

Flashing on top of the ledger board connection to the house is required.

Use a 40 pound live load and a 10 pound dead load – 50 pound total load per square foot for design purposes for decks less than one story high. Decks one story or higher use 60 pound live load and 10 pound dead load – 70 pound total load design.

At the Township's discretion, a survey and/or a PA Architectural or Structural Engineer design may be required. If so, the design must be sealed.

Cantilevered portions of decks in excess of two (2) feet must be engineered.

Permit fees are based on the cost of proposed improvements.

If your property is over the allowable impervious surface limit, you may still be permitted to install a deck under certain circumstances. Contact the Building Department at (610) 645-6200 for information.

Attachments: Residential Building Permit application, Zoning District Requirements, Chart and Impervious Calculation guide.