



City of Rochester, New Hampshire

Building and Licensing Services

Decks / Porches / Pergolas

This handout is a summary of the permit & inspection process as well as standard requirements based on State Building Code and Rochester City Zoning regulations regarding Residential Decks and Porches (3 season, 4 season, screen or unenclosed). Information contained herein does not contain all of the specific codes for construction and shall only be used as a guide.

Permit Submission Requirements:

- Completed building permit application, including valuation (materials & labor).
- One complete set of structure plans (footing plan, framing plan and elevations).
- One copy of a survey or site Plan (which includes lot lines and dimensions, the locations and ground coverage area (size) of all existing structures, the location of proposed deck, indicate setbacks from property lines and any additional information which may be required).
- Deck Application Supplement
- If a porch is attached and enclosed, it is considered living area.

Zoning Requirements: Refer to General Residential Setback Requirements Guidelines.

Deck / Porch Permit Fees: Permit fee is based on \$9.00 per \$1,000.00 of Construction Cost (Rounded Up Nearest \$1,000.00) plus a \$10.00 application fee. Minimum Permit Fee is \$20.00

Licensing Requirements:

- Contractors working on a structure built prior to 1978 are required to provide their Lead Certification Number (see permit application for exceptions.)
- Property owners may perform building related trades on property they own. Property owners may perform mechanical trades, such as plumbing, heating & electrical on property they own and occupy, otherwise a licensed contractor is required. Property owners doing their own work will be required to sign the Property Owner Waiver acknowledging their responsibilities to the New Hampshire State Building Code, to Zoning Ordinances and to other applicable rules and regulation when they are acting as general contractor. All sub-contractors hired must be licensed and disclosed on the application.
- Rental property owners may perform building trade work. However, all plumbing, HVAC and electrical work on rental property shall be performed by a licensed contractor.
- Property owners renovating dwellings with the intent to sell must be state licensed if performing work on more than one property in a two-year period.

Inspection Requirements: The permit and approved plans must be on site upon the start of work until the final inspection has been performed and passed. All construction work shall remain accessible and exposed for inspection until approved by the Building Inspection Department.

All required inspections will be listed on the permit. A final inspection is required upon completion of project and approvals for all other inspections have been complete; inspection photos can be emailed to codes@rochesternh.gov, please include address, permit # and type of inspection you're requesting.

A 24 hour notice is required for all inspections (time frame is subject to change during busy times).

Information and Guidelines:

Setback Information:

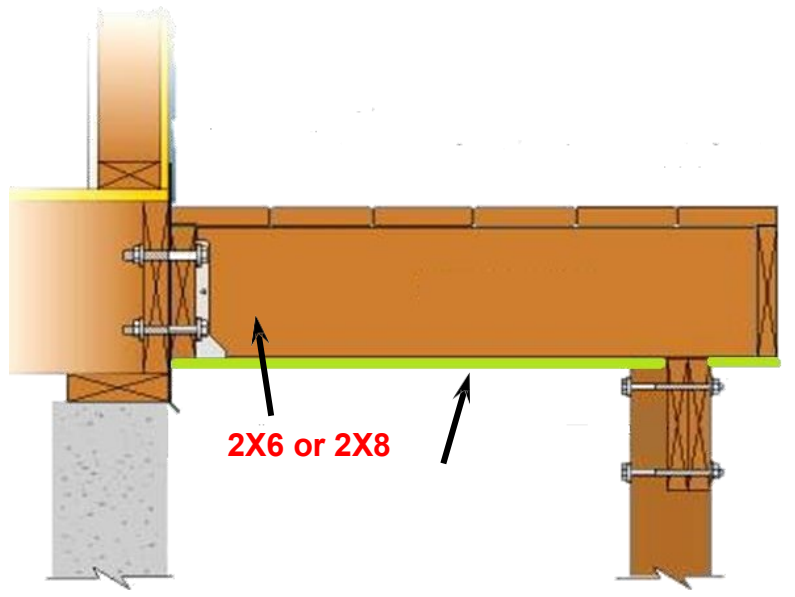
- **Enclosed or Covered Porches:** Same setbacks required as the principal structure.
- **Unenclosed or Uncovered Decks:** May extend into front or rear yard setbacks up to 8 feet, provided it is not higher than the entrance floor level of the building.
- **Pergolas:** Trellis like structures without roof or walls require a zoning permit if less than 200 square feet in size and a building permit if greater than 200 square feet in size. If it is attached to the home, the same setbacks as a deck shall apply. If it is detached, the same setbacks as a shed shall apply.

Structural Definitions:

- **Cantilevers: "Overhanging Joists and 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.
- **Deck Ledger:** The deck ledger shall be properly attached with lag screws and provided with hold down tension devices in at least two locations.
- **Framing Details:** Joists frames into the side of a girder shall be supported by an approved joist hanger and ledger strip not less than 2" by 2".
- **Frost Footings:** Frost footings shall be required for any deck attached to a dwelling, porch or garage that has frost footings. The minimum depth to the base of the footing is 48". The diameter of the frost footing is determined on the load imposed.
- **Guardrails:** Required on all decks more than 30 inches above grade. Rail must be 36 inches minimum in height. Open guardrails and stair railings must have intermediate rails or an ornamental pattern that a four inch sphere cannot pass through.
- **Handrails:** The top shall be placed not less than 34 inches or more than 38 inches above the nosing of the treads. Stairways having four or more risers shall have at least one handrail. Handrail ends shall be returned or terminated in posts. The hand grips 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 handgrip shall have a smooth surface with no sharp corners.
- **Live Load/Dead Load:** All decks shall be designed to support a live load of 50 pounds per square foot.
- **Nails and Screws:** Use only stainless steel, high strength aluminum or hot-dipped galvanized. Approved nails must be used on joist hangers as per manufacturer's specs.
- **Special Design Note:** Think you might enclose your deck in the future? Deck plans are on the assumption that the deck will be used only as a deck for the life of the structure. Because footing sizes, setbacks, structural supports, and a host of other deck components are different for enclosed spaces than they are for decks, it is important that you indicate on your plans the desire to convert the deck at a future date. You should then design your deck to carry future loads and meet setbacks and other rules.
- **Stairs:** Minimum width is 36 inches. Maximum rise is 7 ¾ 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. Nominal 2 inch material required for exterior stair construction.
- **Wood Required:** All exposed wood used in the construction of decks is required to be of approved wood of natural resistance to decay (redwood, cedar, etc.) or approved treated wood. This includes posts, beams, joists, decking and railings. When redwood and cedar are proposed it must be verified as heartwood

This document is for informational purposes only and not intended to address every situation for the permitting and plan review process.

NOTE: Some Composite deck manufacturers prohibit the use of their product with a ceiling

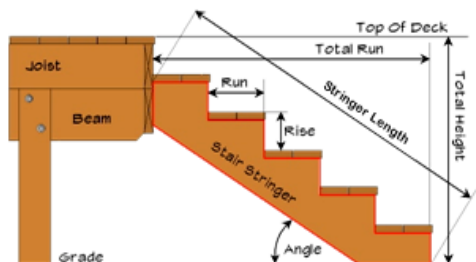


STAIRS

Stairs must have a maximum rise of 7 ¾ inches and a minimum run of 10 inches measured as shown. The greatest riser height within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than ¾ inch. The greatest tread depth within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than ¾ inch. Open risers are permitted provided that a 4" diameter sphere will not pass between the treads.

Stairs must be a minimum of 36 inches wide above the handrail and 31½ inches below the handrail.

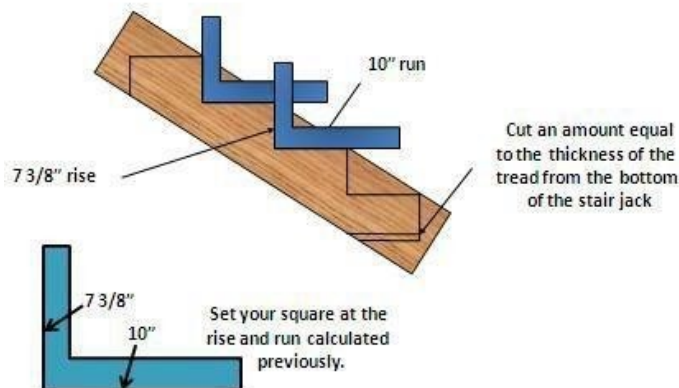
STAIR TERMINOLOGY



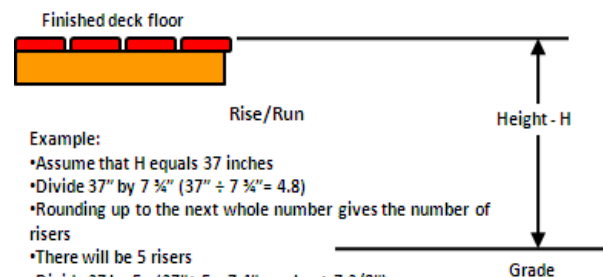
Stair Basics

- The maximum riser height is 7 ¾ inches
- The minimum tread run is 10 inches
- Treads and risers should be approximately equal with the largest not exceeding the smallest by more than ¾ inch.

LAYING OUT STAIR JACKS



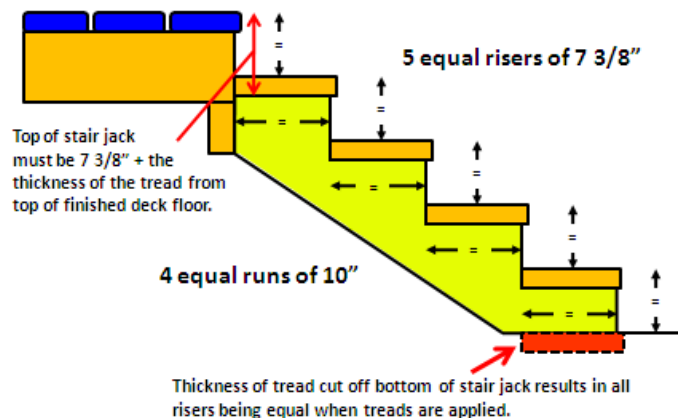
DETERMINING RISE/RUN

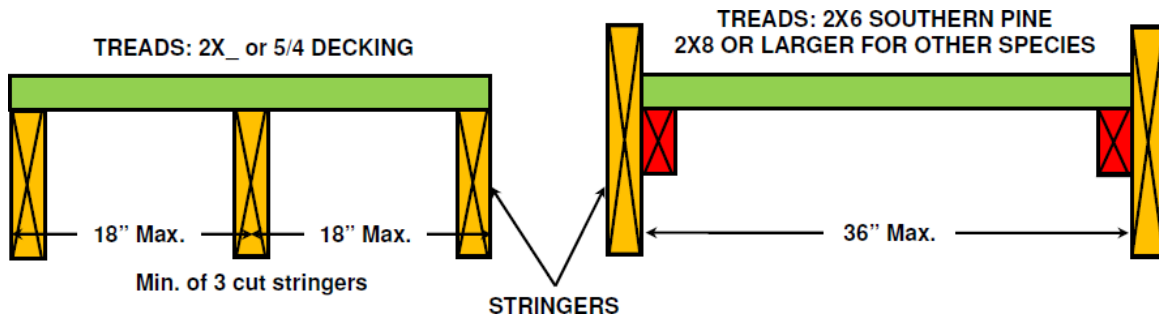


Example:

- Assume that H equals 37 inches
- Divide 37" by 7 ¾" (37" ÷ 7 ¾" = 4.8)
- Rounding up to the next whole number gives the number of risers
- There will be 5 risers
- Divide 37 by 5. (37" ÷ 5 = 7.4" or about 7 3/8")
- Each riser will be 7 3/8"
- For 5 risers there will be 4 treads
- Since each tread must be at least 10", the length of the stair from the face of the deck to the face of the bottom riser will

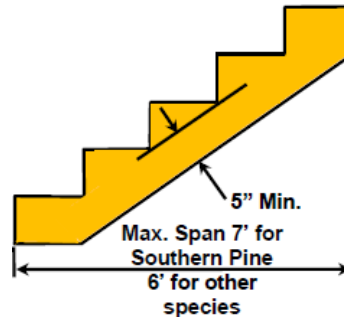
THE COMPLETED STAIR



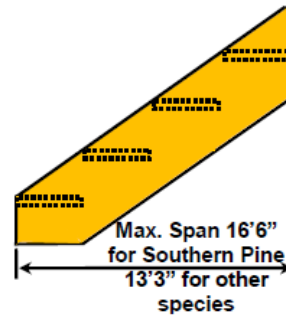


STAIR STRINGER SPANS

LANDINGS OR COLUMNS AND BEAMS MAY BE USED TO SHORTEN STRINGER SPANS

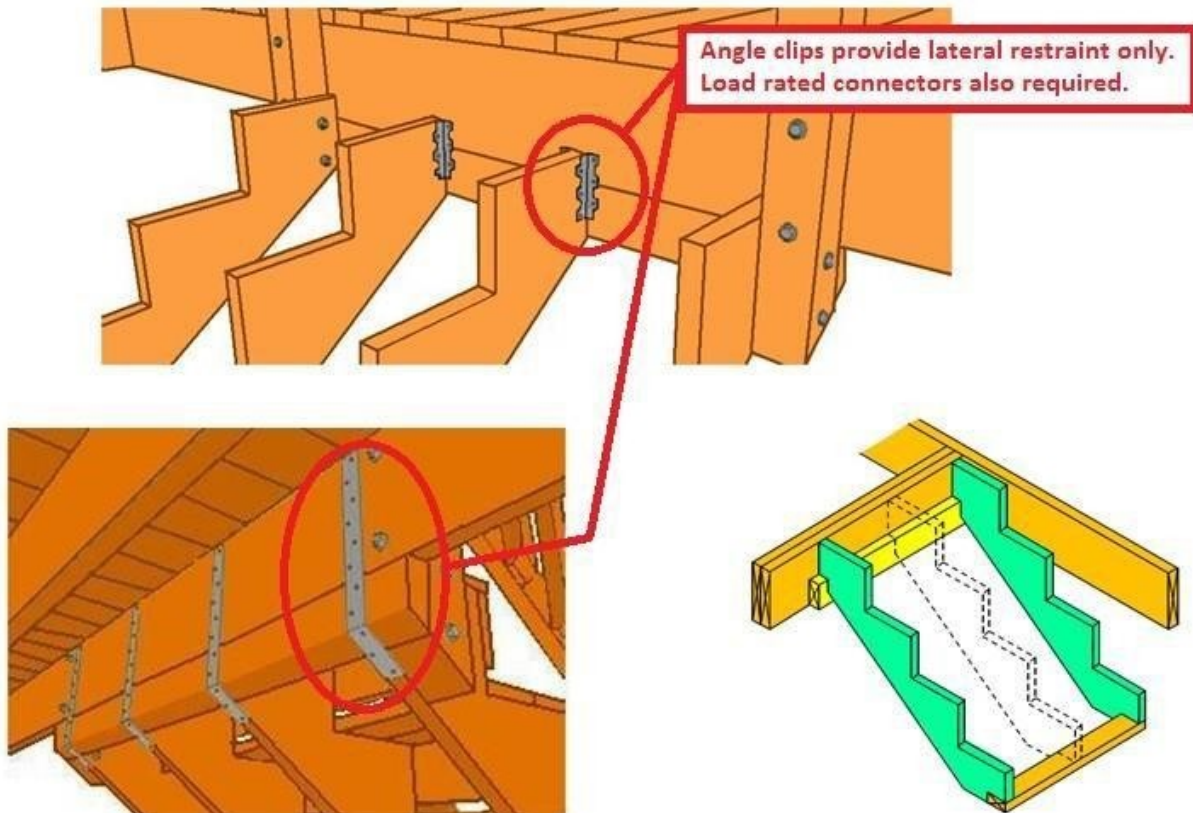


CUT STRINGER



SOLID STRINGER

STAIR ATTACHMENTS



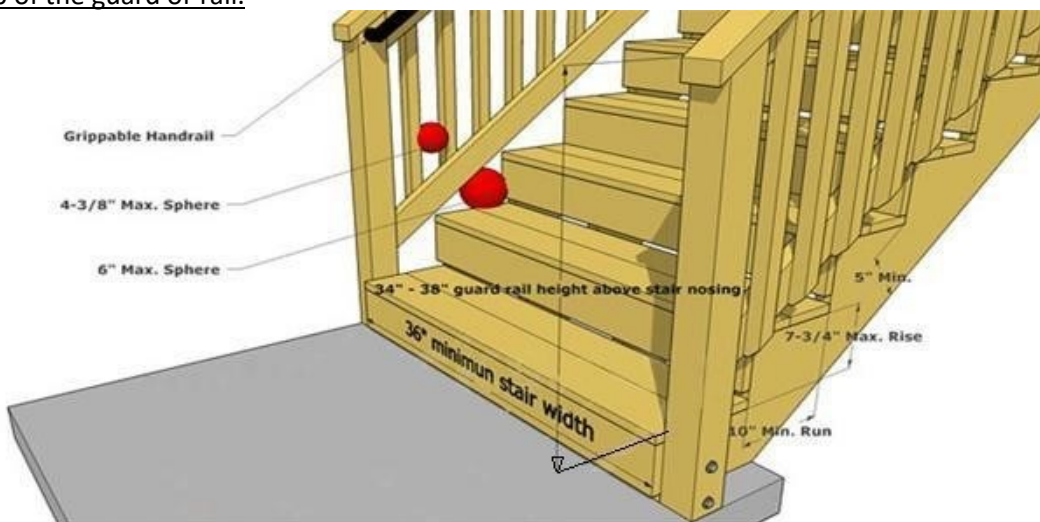
GUARDS AND HANDRAILS

Guards and handrails must be provided as shown on the following illustrations. Guards must continue down stairs where the stair is more than 30 inches above grade. The height of guards on stairs must be 34 inches minimum.

Handrails must be provided on at least one side when there are four or more risers. Handrails must have returns on each end or terminate in a newel post. Other handrail shapes having an equivalent gripping shape may be used with prior approval of the Building Department.

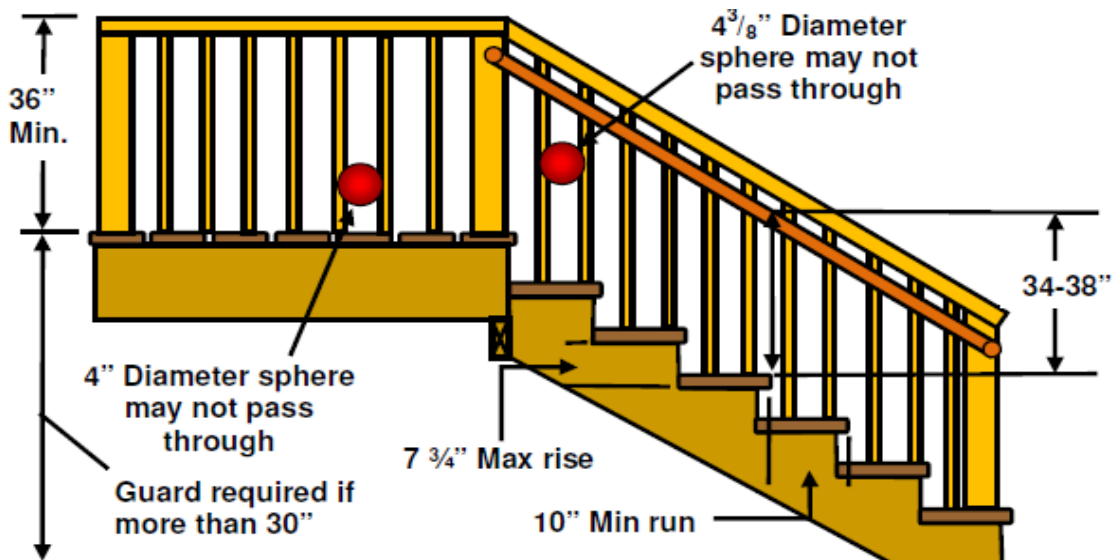
Handrails must be continuous for the entire length of the stairs and may not be interrupted by newel posts except at landings.

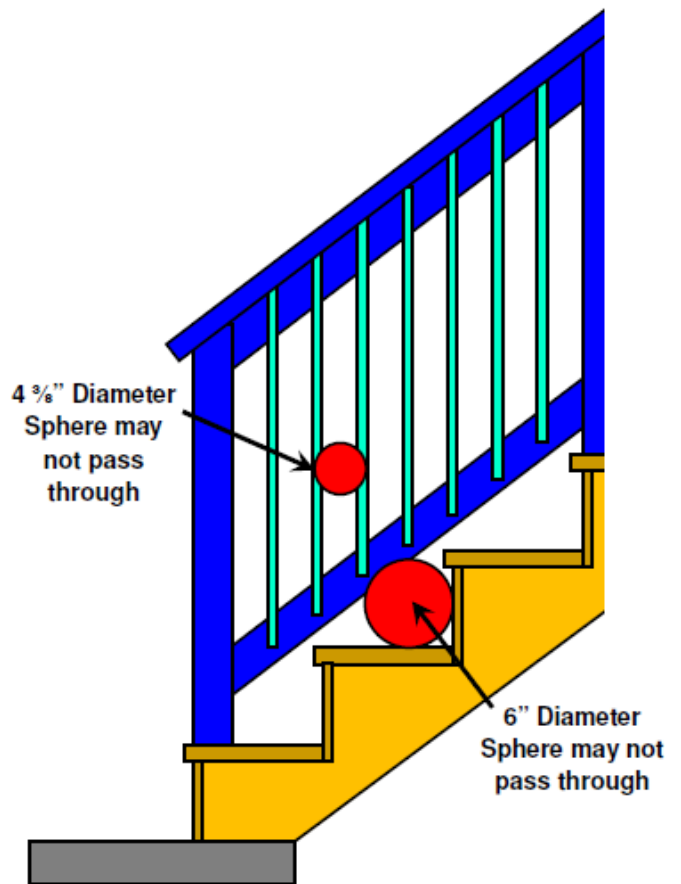
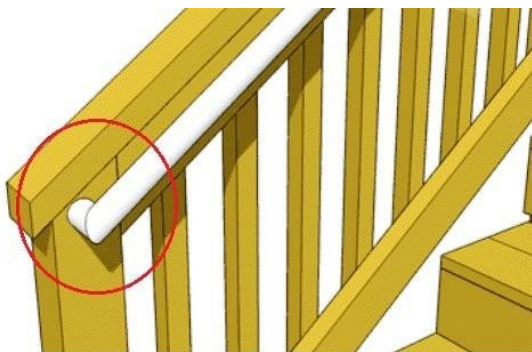
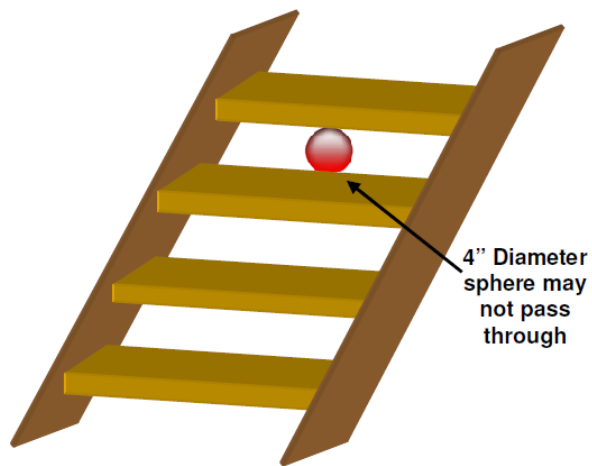
Hand rails and guards must be designed to support a 200 lb. load applied in any direction at any point along the top of the guard or rail.



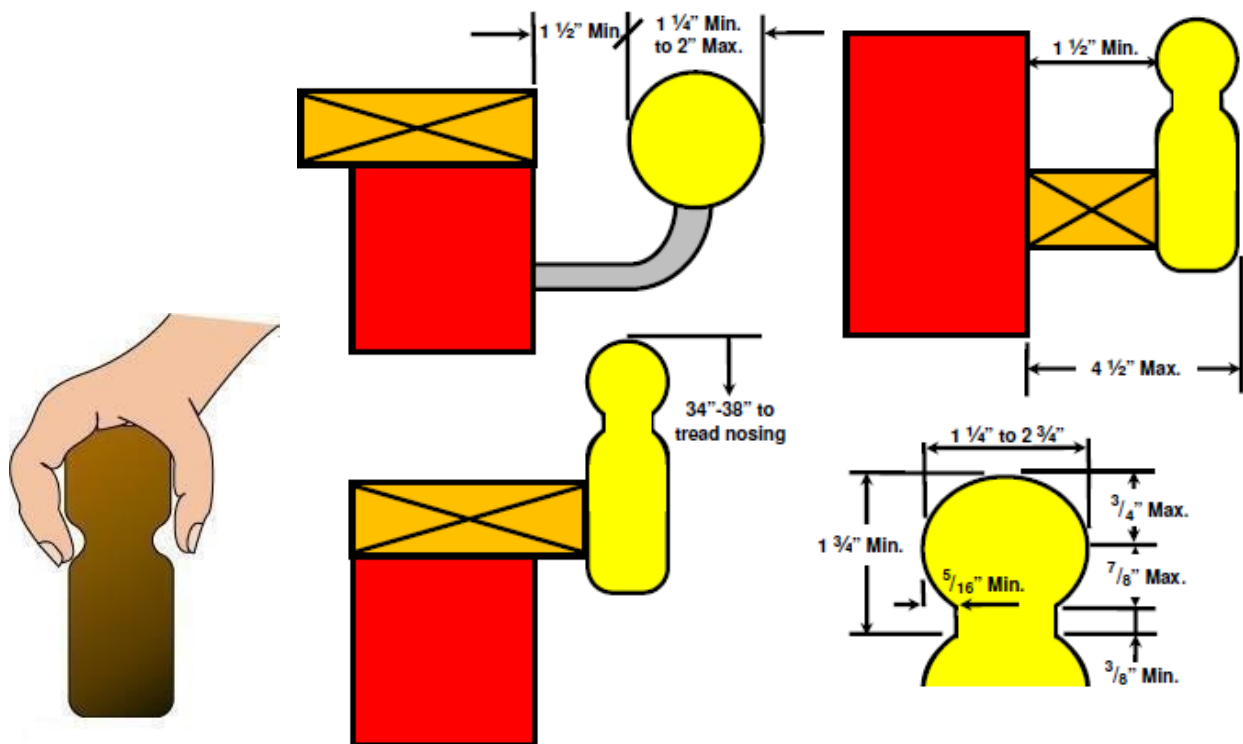
LANDING SHALL SPAN FULL WIDTH OF STAIRS & EXTEND A MINIMUM OF 36 INCHES IN THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL.

STAIRS MUST BEAR ON STRUCTURAL MATERIAL (i.e. treated lumber, concrete, gravel) AND BE PERMANENTLY RESTRAINED FROM LATERAL MOVEMENT.





HANDRAILS MUST RETURN TO ANEWEL POST AND BE CONTINUOUS WITHOUT INTERRUPTION FOR THE LENGTH OF THE FLIGH

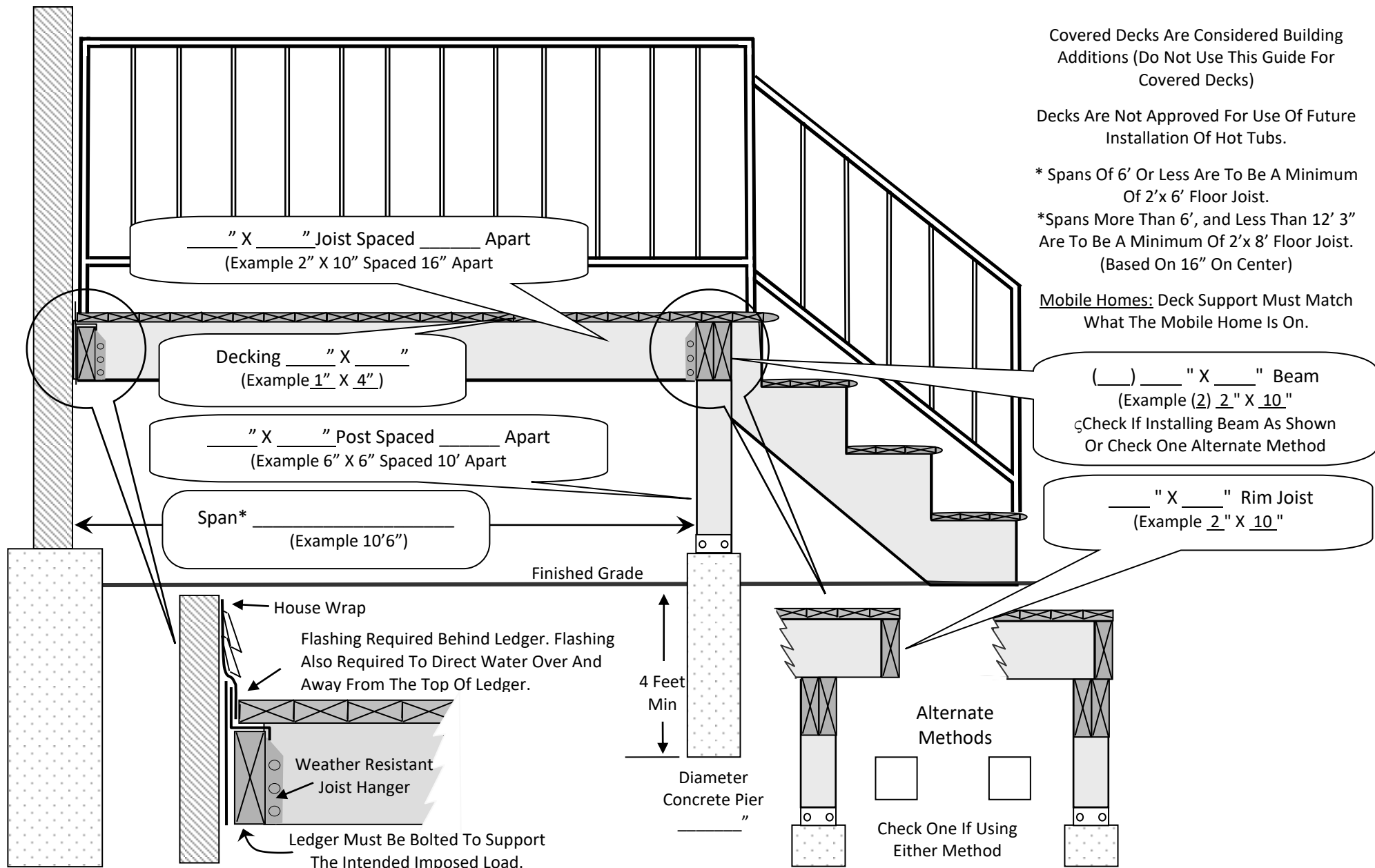


ABOVE GROUND DECK FOOTING REQUIREMENTS

R507.3.2 Minimum depth. Deck footings shall extend below the frost line specified in Table R301.2(1) in accordance with Section R403.1.4.1.

Exceptions:

1. Free-standing decks that meet all of the following criteria:
 - 1.1. The joists bear directly on precast concrete pier blocks at grade without support by beams or posts.
 - 1.2. The area of the deck does not exceed 200 square feet (18.9 m²).
 - 1.3. The walking surface is not more than 20 inches (616 mm) above grade at any point within 36 inches (914 mm) measured horizontally from the edge.
2. Free-standing decks need not be provided with footings that extend below the frost line



Covered Decks Are Considered Building Additions (Do Not Use This Guide For Covered Decks)

Decks Are Not Approved For Use Of Future Installation Of Hot Tubs.

* Spans Of 6' Or Less Are To Be A Minimum Of 2'x 6' Floor Joist.

*Spans More Than 6', and Less Than 12' 3" Are To Be A Minimum Of 2'x 8' Floor Joist. (Based On 16" On Center)

Mobile Homes: Deck Support Must Match What The Mobile Home Is On.



ROCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

DEPARTMENT OF
BUILDING AND LICENSING SERVICES
TELEPHONE: 603-332-3508

Website: www.rochesternh.gov

Online Portal: <https://rochesternh.portal.opengov.com/>

Deck Handout

Based On 2018 ICC IRC
For Residential Use Only

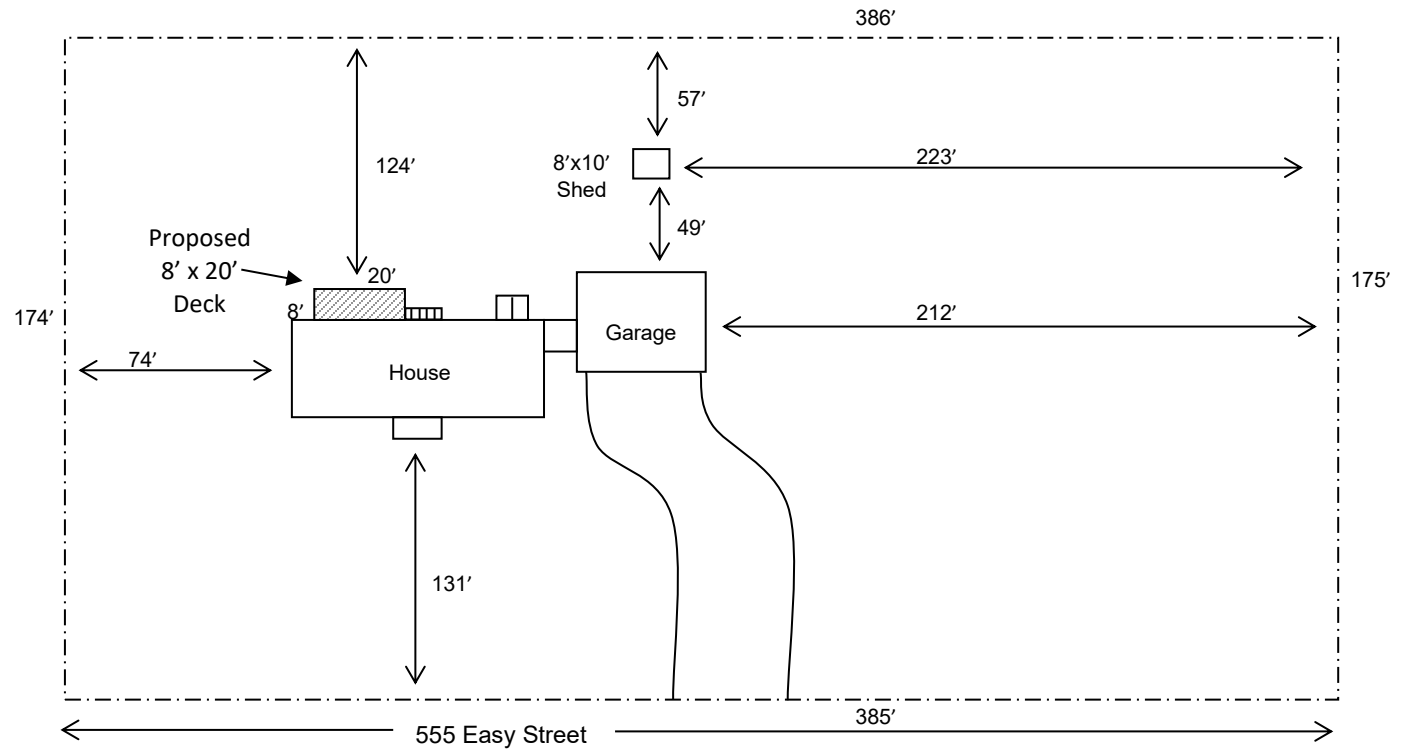
Minimum Setbacks:

	Front Yard	Side Yard	Rear Yard	Distance From Other Buildings/Structures
Agricultural	20'	10'	20'	10'
Residential 1	10'	10'	20'	10'
Residential 2 (Single & 2 Family)	10'	8'	20'	10'
Residential 2 (3, 4& MultiFamily)	15'	10'	25'	10'
Mobile Home Park	20'	15'	15'	10'

A site plan must accompany the application for the Deck.

Steps To Obtain Building Permit

- ◇ Complete Page 8 Of This Guide
- ◇ Fill Out Building Permit Application
- ◇ Provide Plot Plan On Back Of Building Permit Application
- ◇ Submit All Forms To Department of Building And Licensing Services With Payment



Sample Site Plan



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