

# RESIDENTIAL DECK REGULATIONS

## Including Terraces, Cantilevered Balconies, Uncovered Porches and Patios

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A deck is a flat, uncovered platform constructed of wood, concrete, or any impervious material, extending at grade or elevated over yard areas or atop a structure. Terraces, uncovered porches and balconies, and patios are regulated as decks under Alameda Municipal Code section 30-5.7(c).

**When does a deck require a building permit?**

- Decks exceeding 200 sf in size
- Decks over 30 inches above grade
- Decks attached to the dwelling
- Decks serving an exit door

**When does a deck also require Design Review approval in addition to a building permit?**

- Any deck more than 6 feet above grade (measured from grade to the platform)

Through Design Review, the City may require screening and landscaping to minimize privacy impacts on neighbors.

**Are there building setbacks for decks?**

Yes, the Alameda Zoning Ordinance requires decks of varying height to be located a distance from property lines and structures. This setback requirement varies depending on the height of the deck.

Deck Height	Setback from Property Lines	Setback from Buildings on the Same Lot
Under 12"	None	None
12" – 29"	3'	None
30 inches and above	5'	6'

Balconies < 50 sq. ft., have no exterior access and are cantilevered or supported from the main structure may extend 3 feet into the front, rear or street side-yard setback areas. These structures must maintain a setback at least 3' from any property line and cannot project more than 6' from the supporting wall to its furthest outward extension.

**What are the safety requirements for decks?**

Decks 30 inches and higher that are not encompassed by the exterior walls of the main building structure require guardrails at least 42 inches in height at the edges. Guardrails must withstand a 20-pound per foot load applied at the top of the rail. Intermediate members in open-type railing cannot be spaced more than 4 inches apart.

**Applicable California Residential Code:** (CRC) R105.2 (10), CRC R311, CRC R507

- Do not cover any portion of the installation until inspected and instructed: "Okay to cover".
- See CRC R311 for stairs, landings and guardrail code requirements.
- See CRC 507 for deck construction code requirements.

**How are decks on slopes measured?**

Heights and setbacks of decks on slopes higher than 10 percent are calculated based on the average height of numerous points. The top elevation of railings and privacy screens cannot exceed the building height limit.

**Is there a limit to the size of a deck?**

Decks above 30 inches in height and more than 200 square feet in size would count toward the Maximum Main Building Coverage for the property. Decks are calculated at 50 percent of their area in excess of 200 square feet.

**May I build a deck in my front yard or pave it for a patio?**

No. AMC Section 30-5.7 prohibits the paving of the front yard setback, which is typically the front 20' of a property. The AMC further requires such areas to be used exclusively for landscaping.