



Requirements for Building a Patio, Deck or Fence

Pre-Planning

To obtain a permit, you must provide us with a completed building permit application, plot plan, and drawings. A plot plan shows where the patio, deck, or fence is to be located on the lot with the distances noted to the lot lines. **All** buildings on your property must be shown on this drawing. Building drawings must show size, height of deck or fence, and type of footing. Plans must be legible. A blank application, plot plan and building examples are available from the Planning and Zoning Department.

General Requirements:

1. Locate property lines exactly. Estimates are not acceptable. On our first inspection (post-hole footing), we will request you to show us lot pins. A permit will be revoked if property lines are questionable. City personnel will not locate property lines.
2. Remember to call Iowa One-Call at 1-800-292-8989 before you dig.
3. Look up fee schedule.

Contractor Selection: The selection of a contractor to work on your property is your decision entirely.

Patio: The construction of a patio is defined as being on grade or within 12" of the ground, and is made of fieldstone, exposed aggregate concrete, bricks, or paving stones. Zoning setbacks and rules are not used for patio construction requirements. It is possible to construct your patio to your lot line. Please remember not to drain your rainwater onto your neighbor's property.

Porch: Look up Building Code and Definitions

Deck: Deck size is subject to the same zoning requirements as the principal structure.

Construction Details: Frost-depth footings are required for the deck if it is attached to the principal structure or detached with a load-bearing roof. A plastic or canvas canopy on a detached deck does not require frost-depth footings.

General Requirements

1. Frost-depth footings are to be 8" wide and extend 42" deep from the finished grade. Prevent soil to wood contact by using post hole anchors or other approved methods.
2. Concrete for post-hole footings shall be 3,000 lbs. Concrete. All sod and vegetation must be removed under the deck.
3. All deck wood shall be treated and marked or branded by an approved agency certifying for an exterior application. Fasteners are to be galvanized or non-corrosive.
4. Galvanized joist hangers shall be used in place of toe-nailing.
5. Cantilevered deck joists over support beams shall not extend more than 2' over the beam. In addition, the support beam shall not extend over the support post a distance of 2'.
6. Flashing shall be installed at the connection point of the deck and existing structure when exterior finish material is removed.
7. Wood decking shall be nominal 5/4" material when joists or stringers do not exceed 16" o.c. spacing, or nominal 2" lumber may be used on 24" o.c. joist or stringer spacing.
8. Decks 30" or more above finish grade shall be protected by a guardrail of not less than 36" in height. Open guardrails shall have intermediate rails or side rails installed such that a 4" sphere cannot pass through the opening.
9. Stairs serving decks shall have a maximum rise or step of 8" in height and a minimum 9" tread width. A handrail shall be installed on at least one side at a height of 34" to 38" above the nosing of the treads. If both sides of the stairs are open, then handrails shall be installed on both sides. Stair width shall be a minimum of 36". Stair treads shall be bearing on concealed cleats or cut into stringers. Stairs 36" wide will require 3 stringers.
10. Depending on construction techniques, decks more than 6' in height may be required to provide diagonal bracing to withstand lateral loads.

Fence: Residential fences or landscape features such as sculpture or walls may be erected or constructed on property lines, provided no such fence in any front yard exceeds 30" in height, and 6' in height in the case of side or rear yard.

Inspections/Questions: You're responsible for calling the Planning and Zoning Commissioner to arrange for all inspections of your deck or fence. The post-hole footing deck inspection would be the first. Do not conceal any work.

Be sure to call for a **FINAL INSPECTION** once construction is complete. A Certificate of Completion is issued at completion. For further information, you may stop in or call the Planning and Zoning Department at 382-5466.