



Community Development Department  
Planning Division and Building Division  
316 N. Park Ave. \* Helena, MT \* 406-447-8438

## DECK POLICY

As applicable to One- and Two-Family Dwellings  
International Residential Code (IRC)

\*Decks relating to structures other than single family or duplex structures shall comply with requirements of current edition of the International Building Code and City of Helena Zoning regulations\*

### RESIDENTIAL DECKS SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING RESTRICTION AND REQUIREMENTS

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

**DECK** – An exterior floor system supported on at least two opposing sides by an adjoining structure and/or posts, piers, or other independent supports.

**BALCONY** – An exterior floor projecting from and supported by a structure without additional independent supports.

#### **SETBACKS:**

- o (City Code 11-4-2, B.1) – No portion of any building, including decks, (covered or uncovered) and excepting roof eaves, fences, stair steps and landscaping ornaments may be located in any lot line setback. This also includes balconies. See the City Code, Title 11 for specific setback requirements per zone the structure is located in. Contact the City Planning Division office to confirm what zone the subject property is in.
- o Setback measurements shall be taken from lot line to the nearest projecting element of the building.

#### **LOT COVERAGE:**

- o (City Code 11-4-1) – The portion of a lot, stated in terms of percentage, that is covered by all buildings and structures located on the lot but does not include uncovered decks, fences, walls or pools.
- o If deck is covered with any type of solid roof covering, the lot coverage requirements will apply. Pergolas and roll-up shading devices are not considered as solid roof covering.

**Deck structure must comply with all required setbacks from property line and lot coverage requirements, regardless if a building permit is required or not.**

#### **BUILDING PERMIT:**

For decks to be exempt from a building permit, it must meet **ALL** of the following requirements:

- \* Deck must not exceed 200 square feet in area (with or without a roof),
- \* Deck must be less than or equal to 30 inches above adjacent grade(s),
- \* Deck must be independently supported. (If the dwelling supports any portion of the deck, i.e. a ledger board, a building permit is required.)
- \* Deck must not serve the exit door required by Section R311.4.

#### **DECK PERMIT REQUIREMENTS:**

Decks not meeting all 4 (\*) items above must comply with all building code requirements and a permit shall be obtained from the City of Helena Building Division. Drawings shall provide adequate construction details, including, foundation, framing, connections, railings and stairs to determine compliance with building code and zoning requirements. Decks will require a Structural Engineer's analysis if the structure does not comply with prescriptive requirements of the building code for lateral and gravity loads.

See Building Division "Residential One- and Two-Family Dwelling Plan Submittal Requirements" for required documents to be submitted at time of permit application.

Website link to City Code Title 11 and City of Helena Zoning Map -

<https://www.helenamt.gov/government/departments/community-development/planning/planning-information>