This handout provides answers to commonly asked questions about the design, construction and placement of landings, decks, stairs and railings for site built and manufactured homes.

**Do I need a permit to build my landing or deck?**
You will need a building permit to build a landing or deck if it exceeds 200 square feet in area, is over 30 inches above grade at any point, attaches to a dwelling, or if it serves the exit door required by Section R311.4.

**Do I need a separate permit for the landing or deck on my proposed new home?**
No, we will be glad to review your landing or deck along with your house plans. No additional permit will be required as long as you show the location and framing of the attached deck on your site plan and house plan. The fee for the deck will be added to the house permit.

**Do normal zoning yard setbacks apply to landings and decks and handrails?**
Any structure more than 30 inches above grade must meet normal setbacks. If you are close to a property line you should contact the Permit Information Line @ 253-798-3739.

**What type of landing or deck materials are allowed?**
Approved materials for exterior decks include treated outdoor wood and wood with natural resistance to decay. New composite materials are available. Check the manufacturer’s listing before using.
Non treated wood other than noted above is not acceptable.

**Do I need a guard (railing) around my landing or deck?**
You will need a code compliant guard (railing) around your landing or deck if the walking surface is 30 inches or more above grade at any point within 36 inches horizontally.

**Can I get a final inspection on my new house before I build my attached landing or deck?**
You must have a code compliant landing or deck at least 3 feet by 3 feet at the required exits in order to obtain a final inspection.
A code complying guard may be placed across secondary exits.

**NOTE:** The International Residential Code requires all construction to be done to code standards whether or not a building permit is required.

If you have any questions about methods of construction please contact the Building Division @ 253-798-3741.
The following details are examples of the code requirements based on the 2012 International Residential Code for single story decks. The 2012 International Residential Code Section R507 contains additional information and details specific to deck construction.

**SAFETY GLAZING:**

Glazing where the bottom exposed edge of the glazing is less than 36 inches above the plane of the adjacent walking surface of stairways, landings between flights of stairs and ramps shall be considered a hazardous location. [IRC R308.4.6]

Glazing adjacent to the landing at the bottom of a stairway where the glazing is less than 36 inches above the landing and within 60 inches horizontally of the bottom tread shall be considered a hazardous location. [IRC R308.4.7]
ATTACHMENTS:

Example of a deck ledger connection to rim/band joist.

Example of a lateral load device for a deck attached to a house with a ledger.

*State amendment to IRC R507.2.3 provides alternative lateral connection for new decks to existing houses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOIST SPAN</th>
<th>6' and less</th>
<th>6' 1&quot; to 8'</th>
<th>8' 1&quot; to 10'</th>
<th>10' 1&quot; to 12'</th>
<th>12' 1&quot; to 14'</th>
<th>14' 1&quot; to 16'</th>
<th>16' 1&quot; to 18'</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connection details</td>
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<td>On-center spacing of fasteners[^d,e]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2 inch diameter lag screw with 15/32 inch maximum sheathing[^c]</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2 inch diameter bolt with 15/32 inch maximum sheathing</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2 inch diameter bolt with 15/32 inch maximum sheathing and 1/2 inch stacked washers[^h]</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
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</table>

a. The tip of the lag screw shall fully extend beyond the inside face of the band joist.
b. The maximum gap between the face of the ledger board and face of the wall sheathing shall be 1/2 inch.
c. Ledgers shall be flashed to prevent water from contacting the house band joist.
d. Lag screws and bolts shall be staggered in accordance with Section R507.2.1.
e. Deck ledger shall be minimum 2 × 8 pressure-preservative-treated No. 2 grade lumber, or other approved materials as established by standard engineering practice.
f. When solid-sawn pressure-preservative-treated deck ledgers are attached to a minimum 1-inch-thick engineered wood product (structural composite lumber, laminated veneer lumber or wood structural panel band joist), the ledger attachment shall be designed in accordance with accepted engineering practice.
g. A minimum 1 × 9 1/2 Douglas Fir laminated veneer lumber rimboard shall be permitted in lieu of the 2-inch nominal band joist.
h. Wood structural panel sheathing, gypsum board sheathing or foam sheathing not exceeding 1 inch in thickness shall be permitted. The maximum distance between the face of the ledger board and the face of the band joist shall be 1 inch.

*Attachment of free standing (self supported) decks to house or manufactured home for deck stability may be achieved with fasteners spaced 16” OC and staggered in two rows.
STAIR HANDRAIL REQUIREMENTS:

All stairs with 4 or more risers shall have a handrail on at least one side. The handrail height measured vertically from the sloped plane adjoining the nosing shall not be less than 34 inches or more than 38 inches. Handrails shall run continuously from a point directly over the lowest riser to a point directly over the highest riser and shall return to the guard at each end. Handrails may be interrupted by guard posts at a turn in the stair [R311.7.8.2].

Handrails shall be graspable and shall be composed of decay-resistant and corrosion resistant material handrail shall be Type I, Type II, or provide equivalent graspability.

American Forest & Paper Association Inc. has published the “Prescriptive Residential Wood Deck Construction Guide” Based on the 2012 International Residential Code. The construction details in this document are accepted in Pierce County for single level residential wood decks only. You can download the guide from the internet at the following website.  http://www.awc.org/Publications/DCA/DCA6/DCA6-09.pdf