

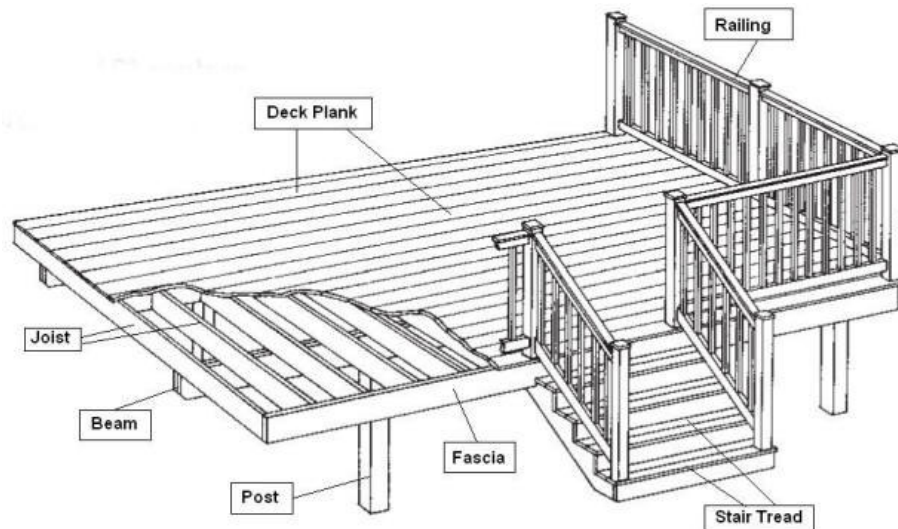
What should I know when planning a deck?

A deck is great way to expand your living space, at a fraction of the cost of indoor remodeling projects. Before you start building, remember that proper planning is key to staying organized and on budget.

Deck Components

Whether you're building a deck yourself or hiring a contractor to do it for you, it's important to understand the different parts of a deck and their functions.

- **Beam** — A large horizontal framing piece typically made of 4x or doubled 2x lumber, which usually rests on posts and is used to support joists.
- **Joist** — Structural members, usually 2x lumber, commonly placed perpendicularly across beams to support decking boards.
- **Flashing** — Continuous galvanized or copper channel that is used to prevent moisture from penetrating between the wall of the house and the ledger board.
- **Ledger** — A board equal in size to the joists that anchors the deck to the house and supports one end of the joists.
- **Post** — A vertical member, usually 4x4 or 6x6, used to support a beam or joist.
- **Stair Tread** — The horizontal platform you step on in a staircase.
- **Fascia** — Trim board used to finish exterior deck framing. Fascia boards are usually made of the same material as the decking.
- **Deck Plank** — The board that forms the base of the walking surface or stairs. CertainTeed vinyl decking ([link to deck product page](#)) comes in three plank lengths — 12', 16', and 20'.
- **Railing** — Railing generally should be installed if a deck is more than 18" above the ground (this will vary depending on local building codes). Standard railing systems include posts, top and bottom rails, balusters, post caps and trim pieces. CertainTeed offers a complete line of low-maintenance railing systems ([link to railing product page](#)) that work with any decking material.



What should I know when planning a deck?

Visualizing Your Deck

While many homeowners choose to build a deck along the back of the house, you can add a deck just about anywhere, provided you follow local building codes.

When envisioning the design of your deck, think about the following:

- Where will the deck be located? You may want it near the kitchen or dining room, for easy access when entertaining. Or perhaps you'd like your deck to surround a pool, pond or hot tub.
- How will you use your deck? Do you want it for entertaining or outdoor dining? If so, be sure to allow ample space for a table and chairs, other seating options and end tables, and maybe even a built-in bench, if desired. Don't forget a place for the grill if you plan on using your deck to barbecue.
- When are you most likely to use your deck? Think about the location of your deck and the times of day you'll be most likely to use it. Will the deck be in the sun or shade during peak usage?
- What types of decorative elements will you incorporate in your design? Do you want a deck with multiple levels, or one that features gentle curves or dramatic angles? Think about the placement of optional items such as railing, plants and lighting. Consider adding a pergola or gazebo to create a shaded area or simply as an attractive architectural element.

Code Compliance

Before you start building your deck, you'll need to obtain a permit from your local building department. Building codes vary from region to region, so be sure to check with your township for the deck codes in your community. Depending on where you live, you may need to follow additional guidelines for historic preservation or rules governed by your homeowner's association. You'll also need to schedule appointments with the local building inspector, who will inspect your deck for code compliance during construction.

Drawing the Plans

The best-made decks start with a detailed plan. This can be done with a pencil, graph paper and a ruler, or with the aid of design software on a computer. You may also hire a building professional to create the drawings for you. However you choose to make your plans, be sure they are drawn to scale, with accurate dimensions and structural details.

Selecting a Deck Material

When choosing a material for your deck, remember that the deck will be exposed to a variety of elements, including rain, snow, sun and possibly even salt spray if you live near an ocean. If you want to avoid the time and expense of annual maintenance, consider a deck made of a durable, easy-care material, such as vinyl. Vinyl decking is easy to clean, never needs painting, and resists staining and fading.

CertainTeed Vinyl Decking comes in four popular colors that are designed to coordinate with a variety of home styles and exterior finishes. It cuts, fastens and handles easier than wood planks, and is backed by an outstanding lifetime limited warranty.

