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## **From the Building Department: Deck Building Tips**

**By Ringo McCollum, Building Official**

Springtime is a good time to consider building, repairing or replacing a deck. The first and most important of our deck building tips is to always get a permit. If you're not sure whether the work needs a permit, please call the Peachtree Corners Building Department at (678) 691-1200.

According to a recent study, 90 percent of the people building decks do not get a permit. Permits and inspections are a good thing for a homeowner. Whether you are building the deck yourself or having a contractor do it, pulling a permit comes with some great benefits to ensure a quality deck is built. Your local building department officials will review your plan for any possible structural or safety problems. During plan review they will give you deck building tips to ensure you and your family are safe.

What kinds of things will a building department look for in a deck structure?

- Footing depths and sizes: Are the footings deep enough and large enough to support the proposed deck? And will they stay put during winter frosts?
- Post Sizes: Are the proposed post supports large enough to support the structure and the intended loads?
- Beam and Joist sizes and spans: Will the joist and beam sizes span the distance safely shown on the plans?
- House Attachment: Will the methods shown on the plans to tie the deck into the house create any problems?

These are just a few of the things your local building department will review. Remember, these recommendations are in your best interest. Nobody wants to build a deck that is substandard and will need to be torn down or repaired in the near future. Another positive way to look at this plan review is as a consultation. You can look at the permit fee as a consultation fee for helping you build the best deck possible.

## **Inspections**

Part of your deck building permit fee includes a couple of inspections, a footing inspection and a final inspection. Typically, the inspector will check the footing depths before you pour them and inspect framing after everything is complete. Always use your city inspectors as a source of information.

More information on decks can be found on the Peachtree Corners website under Building & Permitting/Forms & Permits/Building Guides and these Building Guides are available in the lobby of City Hall.