



Planning Your Deck

Once you have decided on how you will use the deck, where you will put it, how big it will be and learned what your local building codes and permit requirements are, it is time to start making some design choices. Your Curtis Lumber salesperson can help you make some of these choices, however having a good idea of what you think you might want, can only help.

Deck Design Considerations

There are five main areas to consider when designing a deck. Some are determined by your style and taste, while others are dictated by local building codes. These design elements include shape, height, color, railings, and architectural interest.

Shape

Choosing a shape for your deck can accent your home's attractive exterior. Decks can be built in virtually any shape, but expect that the more complicated the shape, the more expensive it will be to build. The best option is to choose a shape that will harmonize with the lines of your home. Homes of confusing shape can be balanced with a simple deck and plain homes can be jazzed up with an odd-shaped deck. The most common deck shape is a rectangle attached to the back of the home leading to the backyard, but there are more styles that you may not have considered. Think about wraparound decks, L-shaped decks, decks that lead to a pool, islands, peninsulas, and even rounded decks.

Decking can also be turned at a 45 degree angle to achieve added interest, especially on homes with large blank walls. Overall, you probably can't change your house to suit your deck, but it is possible to change your landscaping in conjunction with your new deck.

Height

In general, the initial height of an attached deck is determined by the access door from your home. The decking should come to within two inches of the door from the house. Then, the deck should have stairs leading from the deck surface to the ground. If the deck is too high or on sloped ground, you may want to consider multiple levels to follow the slope and not expose the deck's framework. Deck height can be determined by local codes, so be sure to reference them before finalizing your finished height.

Color

When most people think of a deck, they immediately think of the exposed wood and how it will look. The wood grain and coloring of a deck can accent or detract from your home, so be sure to choose carefully. Most wood decking will gray over time and needs to be continually sealed. If you want your deck to be a specific color, apply deck stain or use composite decking that holds its color for the life of the product. Check out the decking page on our website to learn more about the options available.

Railings

The first thing people will notice on your deck is your railing. Because of this, the railing presents an area where you can use creativity. The primary limitation on a railing is the building code. The railing will keep people safe on your deck but also cannot have openings small enough for children to get their heads or hands caught. Be sure to check local codes before deciding on a railing. Once you know what options you have, you may want to use a variety of posts, balusters, and rails to satisfy structural requirements. Your local Curtis Lumber can show you a variety of railing options and be sure to check the railings page on our website.

Architectural Interest

Most decks have a design feature that creates interest and becomes the focal point of the deck. The most common features are multiple levels, transitions to a patio, built in benches and planters, and building the deck around trees or rocks. Pergolas and gazebos also create aesthetically appealing deck areas. If you're looking for that special touch, speak with one of our salespeople to talk about what you might add to your deck for more visual appeal.