



City of Columbus
Mayor Michael B. Coleman

Department of Development

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Construction Industry Communication #23

From: Keith Wagenknecht, Chief Building Official

Re: Permits required for installation of a deck -- 1, 2, 3-Family dwelling units.

Requirements: Section 311.2.1 of the 2006 Residential Code of Ohio (RCO) requires exterior exit balconies, stairs and similar facilities to be installed to resist both vertical and lateral forces. Such attachment shall not be accomplished by use of toenails or nails subject to withdrawal. Where the existing construction does not readily accommodate direct attachment, an alternate installation method may be submitted to the Chief Building Official for approval.

Section 311.4.3 requires that a floor or landing be provided on each side of each exterior door except where a stairway of two or fewer risers is located on the exterior side of a door, other than the exit door. The floor or landing shall not be more than 8.25 inches lower than the top of the threshold provided the door, other than the exterior storm door or screen door, does not swing over the landing.

Background: The City of Columbus has historically not required a permit for an exterior deck meeting the definition of an accessory structure defined as follows: An unheated, one (1) story, detached building that is accessory to a one (1), two (2), or three (3) family dwelling and contains less than one hundred sixty-nine (169) square feet of gross floor area.

Memorandum: The new interpretation is that any exterior door is considered an exit door and therefore must have a landing complying with these RCO sections:

311.2.1 & 311.4.3 - A deck is considered to be a landing which must be attached to the structure and have no more than an 8.25 inch step from the floor of the dwelling unit.

311.5.3 – Stair Treads and Risers: Risers no more than 8 ¼ inch high, treads not less than 9 inches, open risers shall be permitted provided that the opening between treads does not permit the passage of a 4 inch sphere. Solid risers shall have a minimum ¾ inch to maximum 1 ¼ inch nosing.

311.5.4 – Landings for Stairways: Shall be provided at the top and bottom of each stair a minimum 36 inches measured in the direction of travel.

312.1 Requires a 36 inch high guardrail be provided on all porches, balconies or raised floor surfaces located more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below.

311.5.6 - Stairs with more than three risers shall have a handrail on at least one side, mounted at 34-38 inches above the plane of the stair nosing.

703.8 Requires corrosion-resistive flashing be provided in the exterior wall envelope in such a manner as to prevent entry of water into the wall cavity or penetration of water to the building structural components where porches, decks or stairs are attached to a wall or floor assembly of wood-frame construction.

A permit is required to ensure compliance.