

Deck Safety Guidelines You Need to Know

Deck safety is very important. A carefree evening with friends and family can be ruined in a moment by a deck failure and sudden injury. At Archadeck, we recommend periodic deck safety inspections to ensure your outdoor space is fit for entertaining. Our acronym **BE SAFER** sums it up quite nicely.

B**E****S****A****F****E****R**

BOARDS

Look at the condition of your deck boards. Most wood will show some cracks and splits over time, but is the general condition of the boards good, or are the boards splintering and unsafe to walk on?

EVERY CONNECTION

A deck should be built using a variety of fasteners and metal hardware connectors to create a continuous pathway to ensure deck stability and safety. Check to see if the appropriate fasteners and connectors were used when constructing the deck. Look at the condition of the hardware. Does any of it need to be replaced?

STRUCTURE

If visible, look at the posts, beams and joists that provide the structural framework of the deck. What is their condition? Is there any noticeable sagging between supports?

ATTACHMENT

The attachment of the deck to the house (*at an area called the house band*) is the area where most deck failures occur. Pay special attention to this area and check to make sure that the deck is properly attached to the house band with appropriate screws or bolts and that it is properly flashed for water protection. Nails should never be used for this type of attachment.

FOOTINGS

The footings receive and support the weight (*also known as the load*) on a deck and the columns that bear on them. A footing that is sinking may cause a noticeable sag in an area or a column separating from a beam.

EXITS

Check the areas where people exit from the deck. These exits usually involve stairs, so be sure to check the condition of the material used on the stair stringers, stair treads and risers.

RAILS

Look at the condition of the rail posts and sections of railing on the deck to make sure that the railing is secure. Check to make sure that the pickets/balusters are fastened securely and spaced no more than four inches apart.

