



Subject: The Top 10 Ways to Determine if Your Deck is Safe and Sound

We at Deck Helmet perform many deck repair and maintenance projects for folks in the Washington area. Many of these calls involve extensive deck repairs that may have been avoided with proper maintenance and homeowner education. These 10 tips will ensure your deck remains safe throughout the summer season and well into the future.

1. Push on railings and banisters to make sure they're secure.
2. Check to make sure they're high enough to keep people safe (most codes require a 36-inch-high railing at minimum).
3. Rails should be no more than 4 inches apart (measured from the inside of the rail) to keep small children and pets from squeezing through. This is especially important if your deck is elevated.
4. Check the risers and stringers, the sides of the stairs that hold up the steps, to be certain they are securely attached.
5. If guardrails are used in the staircase, make sure they are no more than 4 inches apart.
6. If the area behind the stair treads is open, the opening should be no more than 4 inches high.
7. Rot is wood's worst enemy, so check several different areas of the deck to be sure the wood is still sound. This includes the ledger board (where the deck attaches to the house), support posts, joists underneath the deck, deck boards, railings, and stairs. Use a tool such as an ice pick or screwdriver to penetrate the wood. If you can easily push 1/4 to 1/2 inch into the lumber, break off a sliver of wood without splinters, or discover that the wood is soft and spongy; your deck might be decaying. (Solid wood will resist the tool.) Small holes in the wood may indicate insects. Replace the damaged wood to maintain strength and integrity.
8. Tighten any loose fasteners (nails, screws, or anchors) and pound in any nails that have popped up.
9. Rusted or corroded fasteners need to be replaced because they can cause the surrounding wood to deteriorate.
10. The deck and stairs should appear even and should not sag, sway, or move when tested.

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Sincerely ,

The Deck Helmet Teamnas
1-888-5-DECK-HELMET