

Manual for the Inspection of Residential Wood Decks and Balconies

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Abstract

Residential deck and balcony failures are preventable if the decks and balconies are maintained and inspected regularly. Inspection of in-service decks or balconies is not common and often is unregulated or building codes do not appear to be widely enforced. With every failure, the need for a comprehensive inspection manual for residential wood decks and balconies becomes more apparent.

Research was conducted on inspection techniques, common deck and balcony construction methods, maintenance issues, decay detection and the evolution of the building code regulations on decks and balconies. Eight decks were inspected to find the extent of structural inadequacies and non-conformance with building codes.

Using the information gathered from the research and inspections, a *Manual for the Inspection of Residential Wood Decks and Balconies* was written for professional inspectors and building officials. The manual includes recommended methods to prepare for inspection to preparation of final reports. It contains an appendix with information on the “pick test” for detecting early decay, information on adequate deck attachment, and a sample report for a complete deck inspection.

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