

GET DECKED OUT, BUT DO IT SAFELY

A message from Liberty Mutual Insurance

Your deck is a great place for gathering with friends and family when the weather is nice, but proper deck upkeep is crucial. Here are some tips to help ensure your deck is safe before you host your next BBQ:

Keep a Lookout, and Get an Inspection

- Watch out for soft, spongy wood, cracks over a quarter-inch or wood that breaks without splintering, as these are sign of decay. Try to penetrate the wood with a screwdriver; if it goes in a quarter-inch or more, you might be dealing with decay.
- Check for gaps or loose flashing, often installed where the deck meets the house.
- Inspect the caulk that seals any overlapping pieces between the ledger board and your house. Recaulking any problem areas will help protect your house from water damage.
- Sagging in an area and columns separating from a beam can be signs that your support beam is sinking.
- Consider a professional inspection, particularly if you have an older deck.
- Download the [NADRA Deck Evaluation Form](#) for a deck safety checklist.

Stay Safe

- Replace all rotting wood to maintain the integrity of your deck.
- Before resurfacing your deck with a penetrating waterproof finish, power wash it with a solution of three parts water to one part bleach.
- Tighten any loose connections between support posts and deck beams.
- Keep your friends' and family's bare feet safe by keeping an eye out for exposed nails or splintering wood.
- Push on railings and pickets/balusters to make sure they're secure.
- Check to make sure your deck meets local codes and regulations, such as railing height, baluster spacing and weight restrictions.
- To prevent fires, use caution when grilling or using anything with an open flame on or near your deck.

Keep your deck up to code and take these easy precautions to make sure your friends and family are protected any time you enjoy the great outdoors.

It's all about protecting what's important to you. To learn more about Liberty Mutual Auto and Home Insurance or to get your free, no-obligation quote on Liberty Mutual home and auto insurance by calling 800-809-9778 or visit LibertyMutual.com/NAR

SOURCES:

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/news/2015/07/5-steps-to-a-safer-deck/index.htm>

http://www.nadra.org/consumers/deck_safety_month.html