

# xDream Woodwork Ltd.

## Annual Deck Checkup

### Materials

Check for split or decaying wood. Inspect cracks with a flathead screwdriver, if you can insert it more than ¼ inch into any cracks, or if the wood feels spongy or breaks off without splintering, this could indicate rot. Keep an eye out for holes, which could mean insects have burrowed in and made a home.

### Ledger Board

This weight-bearing board connects the deck to your house. Make sure it's attached with ½-inch stainless- or galvanized-steel lag screws and through bolts, rather than nails, which can pop out. Check for a widened gap between the house and the ledger, which may signal that the bolts need tightening. A recent development in this type of screw is called RSS (Rugged Structural Screw) from GRK Fasteners

### Flashing

Flashing around the ledger board prevents moisture from building up and causing rot. Look to see if it has pulled away from the house, and make sure caulk that seals overlapping pieces is intact. Inspect for mud or debris stuck between the spacer and the exterior wall, a sign the flashing's been breached.

### Railings and Balusters

Firmly grasp and wriggle these to make sure they're secure. Also double-check whether they meet local codes, which generally call for a railing on a deck that is greater than 600mm (24 Inches) above grade at least 900mm (3 feet) high with balusters spaced no wider than 4 inches apart. Decks that are over 1.8 meters (6 Feet) above grade require a railing of 1070mm (42 Inches) in height. There are to be no members, attachments or openings between 10mm(4 Inches) and 900mm (3 feet) that would facilitate climbing. Screw loose pieces back into place, adding glue for extra security, or replace them entirely.

### Support Posts

Look for loose connections between posts and the deck's beams. Tighten and replace through bolts as needed. Posts should be 6 inches square or larger, and no taller than 14 feet.

### Joists

Check all joists for cracks and loose connections. Rim joists should be nailed with a minimum of three nails to each joist. As well there should be one screw at alternating edges of the rim joist along its length. The end joists should be doubled up and have two screws through the rim joist. The nails provide shear strength and the screws help prevent the rim joist from twisting.

### Surface Finish

Look for mildew or areas where water doesn't bead up on contact. If you find any, power-wash the deck with a solution of one part bleach (use only oxygenated bleach for cedar decks), three to five parts water, and laundry soap. Let it dry before applying a new layer of penetrating waterproof finish.

**xDream Woodwork can come and perform this complementary checkup of your deck or you can do it yourself. Either way before the busy summer season you should ensure the safety of your deck by giving it an annual checkup**

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