



Check Your Deck For These 6 Repair Issues

It's important to give your deck an annual inspection to keep it safe, functional and looking its best. We recommend inspecting your deck at the beginning of each spring season for issues like wood damage, rot, loose nails, and other types of wear and tear.

It's important to address these issues before they become bigger problems or cause an injury. Check your deck for these 6 repair issues:

1) **Inspect The Wood** - Wood needs to be maintained, which includes cleaning, sanding, polishing and/or painting. Here are several things to look for:

- Look for evidence of rot. If you suspect an area has rot, use a knife and gently poke into the area. If it is soft and spongy, the wood needs to be repaired or replaced
- Check the wood for splinters or cupping (sinking)
- Inspect the end of the wood boards for warping
- Check several different sections of the deck to make sure wood is still sturdy and solid. These include ledger boards, joists under the deck, deck boards, railings, and stairs
- Inspect for small holes in the wood, which may indicate insect damage, particularly termites

2) **Look For Nail Pops** - Wood boards or planks on older decks are often secured with nails, which are prone to popping up throughout the year. This is caused by wood expanding and contracting during temperature changes. The contraction and expansion force the nail to squeeze or push up and out of the wood. Of course, these should be nailed down or, better yet, replaced with screws, which will make things more secure.

3) **Inspect The Posts** - Decking posts are the vertical framing parts that support the beams. Like other parts of the deck, the posts need to be checked out for rot and splitting. Pay special attention to the ends of the posts, where rotting and splits are more likely to develop.

Sitting moisture is the main cause of wet or dry rot. If it is black and spongy or has dark brown strands, it is likely to be wet rot. Dry rot is lighter in color, but also soft (like wet rot).

After rot issues are addressed, step back and survey the posts to be sure they are level.

4) **Inspect The Railings** - Vertical railings don't get the same type of wear and tear as other parts of your deck but they can warp, twist or break. Here's how to check the railings:

- Inspect for signs of rot or splitting
- Be sure the railing posts are fastened tightly to the deck
- Hold the railing and try to shake it. Does it shake easily or seem wobbly or unsteady?
- Inspect other railing connections and fasteners, like the balusters or balustrade. Secure and tighten or loosen wobbly rails

5) **Look For Weathered Or Discolored Boards** - If the boards of your wood deck are discolored—usually gray—it is probably time for a good power washing. We recommend having your deck power washed twice a year, in the spring and fall. If your deck is more weathered, then the boards may need to be replaced.

6) **Confirm Your Deck Is Sealed & Waterproofed** - It is recommended to have your deck waterproofed once a year. A good way to determine whether or not it's time to get your deck waterproofed again is to pour a few drops of water onto the wood. If the water droplets bead up then your deck is still properly waterproofed. However, if the water soaks into the wood, then your deck is no longer sealed and most likely needs to be waterproofed again.

Have any questions? We welcome you to contact us at 571-297-1445