



The core principles of decking typically involve creating a safe, durable, and aesthetically pleasing outdoor space, while also considering the practicality and maintenance of the product(s) chosen. This includes but is not limited to ensuring correct structural support, prioritizing safety features like lighting and railings, and selecting the materials that are both visually appealing and resistant to wear and tear.

Here is a more detailed breakdown and key principles involved when building the deck of your dreams:

### **1. Structural Integrity & Foundation:**

- **Proper Footings:**

Footings provide the foundation for the deck, preventing shifting and ensuring long-term stability.

- **Strong Framing:**

The frame, including posts, beams, and joists, must be able to support the weight of the deck and the intended use.

- **Ledger Board Attachment:**

Attaching the deck to the house using a ledger board is crucial for stability and preventing movement.

- **Joist Spacing and Support:**

Joist spacing and appropriate blocking or bridging are for safety reasons, are absolutely essential for load distribution and preventing sagging of decking boards.

### **2. Safety and Functionality:**

- **Clear Pathways & Traffic Flow:**

Designing the deck to allow for easy movement and access, avoiding obstructions and creating a smooth walking experience.

- **Safe Railings and Steps:**

Railings and well-lit steps are essential for safety, especially when accessing the deck from the house.

- **Lighting:**

Adequate lighting is crucial for visibility, especially at night, and adds to the overall safety and ambiance.

- **Slip-Resistant Decking:**

- Choose decking materials, such as a brushed or scraped surface, that offer good traction to minimize the risk of accidents, especially on those wet days.
- **Childproof Features:**

For families with children, consider safety gates, barriers, or other features to enhance safety.

### **3. Aesthetics and Visual Appeal:**

- **Color Coordination:**

Select decking and border colors that complement the house and create a harmonious overall look.

- **Deck Design and Style:**

Consider the desired aesthetic and choose materials and designs that fit the overall style of the home and yard.

- **Furniture Placement:**

Arrange furniture to optimize space, create comfortable seating areas, and avoid obstructing pathways.

### **4. Durability and Maintenance:**

- **Material Selection:**

Choose durable decking materials that can withstand weather exposure and require minimal maintenance.

- **Pest Control Measures:**

Consider preventative measures to protect the deck from pests and insects.

- **Sealing and Staining:**

Regularly sealing and staining wood decks can help protect them from moisture damage and extend their lifespan.

- **Future Maintenance:**

Plan for regular maintenance tasks, such as cleaning, sealing, and repairing, to bring the life back and keep the deck looking it's finest.

**\*\*\* Wood decking should never sit in moisture and proper air flow underneath the deck needs to be considered for those humid summer months. \*\*\***

By considering these core principles, you are able to create a deck that is not only structurally sound and safe, but also visually appealing to family and friends alike while remaining enjoyable for years to come.