PRINTABLE CHECKLIST · DECKS

Deck inspection checklist (BC)

Tick-box checks for each deck inspection stage, tied to BC Building Code 2024 Part 9 and to the city inspection pages. Print it and take it to the site.

By **Mark Dupuis** · Last reviewed: September 25, 2026

Built from the BC Building Code 2024, the Vancouver Building By-law 2025, the Duncan, Victoria and Vancouver inspection documents and BC Housing's deck guide · Independent site — not a municipality or the Province

This checklist is a preparation aid, not a guarantee of passing inspection. Your inspector's decision and the current code and bylaw govern.

Use this checklist the day before each deck inspection. It follows the stages BC building departments use for a house deck: **before you book**, **footings and excavation** (before any concrete), **framing** (before decking or skirting hides it), and **final**. Every line points to the article of the **BC Building Code 2024 Part 9** it comes from, or to the city page that sets it (Province of BC, BC Building Code 2024). Article numbers were checked against the official BCBC 2024 PDF. **In the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Building By-law 2025 (VBBL) applies instead of the BCBC.** Its Part 9 numbering for these items matches, with the Vancouver differences noted below (City of Vancouver, VBBL).

Address: _____ Permit no.: _____ Inspector / phone: _____

Inspection booked for: _____

The printable deck inspection checklist

Before you book any inspection

Inspectors fail work that isn't ready, and some cities charge for the return visit. Check these first, every time.

- [ ] The building permit is issued and posted where the city requires it. Duncan requires it posted conspicuously on site; Victoria requires the Notice of Construction placard to be readable from each street frontage. (Duncan Bylaw 3254 s.17; Victoria permit package)
- [ ] The approved (stamped) drawings are on site and match what you built. Victoria says the issued plans must be on site for every inspection. (Victoria permit package)

- [ ] You are booking with enough notice: 48 hours in Duncan, 24 hours in Victoria, before 2 p.m. the business day before in Vancouver. Other cities set their own. Verify with the city. (Duncan s.14.3; Victoria; Vancouver)
- [ ] The stage is completely ready, not “nearly”. Duncan charges $50 for a callback inspection and Vancouver charges reinspection fees. (Duncan fees; Vancouver)
- [ ] Changes from the approved drawings were submitted and accepted before they were built. Victoria’s permit package includes a revision form for this.
- [ ] Any engineer’s letters or schedules your permit lists are ready to hand over, or already submitted.
- [ ] Safe access for the inspector: open holes guarded, ladders secured, dogs inside.

Stage 1: Footings and excavation (before concrete)

Book this after the holes are dug and forms are set, and before you pour. Duncan’s bylaw lists a forms inspection before concrete is poured. Vancouver’s guide lists footings and forms after formwork and before pouring. Victoria’s list has no separate deck-footing stage, so ask your inspector.

- [ ] Footing locations match the approved site and footing plans, including the distances to lot lines. (Vancouver stages guide)
- [ ] If any footing is within 0.5 m of a required setback, right-of-way or easement in Duncan, the BC land surveyor’s certificate is accepted before the pour. (Duncan Bylaw 3254 s.14.2)
- [ ] Holes go down to undisturbed soil, and footings bear on undisturbed soil, rock or compacted granular fill. (9.12.2.1., 9.15.3.2.)
- [ ] Footing depth meets Table 9.12.2.2., unless the deck qualifies for 9.12.2.2.(7): one storey, 55 m² or less, 600 mm or less to the underside of the joists, no roof, not attached. In Vancouver, the inspection guide checks a minimum 45 cm (18 in.) frost protection. (9.12.2.2.; Vancouver guide)
- [ ] Footing area matches the drawings (sized from Table 9.15.3.4. and 9.15.3.7.). Footings are at least 100 mm thick, and no thinner than their projection beyond the post. (9.15.3.4., 9.15.3.7., 9.15.3.8.)
- [ ] Form depth and width match the approved plans. (Vancouver guide)
- [ ] Post anchors or uplift connectors are on site and will be set as detailed. Exterior posts need resistance to uplift and lateral movement. (9.23.6.2.)
- [ ] Tree protection barriers are up where your permit requires them. Vancouver has a separate tree barrier inspection. (Vancouver guide)

- [ ] Excavated soil is kept away from the house foundation drainage, and the holes are guarded.

Stage 2: Framing (before decking, skirting or anything that hides it)

The framing inspection is where most deck failures are found. Nothing should cover the posts, beams, joists, hangers or ledger until it passes.

- [ ] Posts are at least 140 × 140 mm (or 184 mm round) unless calculations show smaller is adequate, centred on the footings, and separated from concrete in contact with the ground. (9.17.4.1., 9.17.2.1., 9.17.4.3.)
- [ ] Posts are braced against racking, unless the deck is low (joists 600 mm or less above ground, no superstructure). (9.17.2.2.)
- [ ] Beam and joist sizes, spacing, species and grade match the span tables and the drawings. (9.23.4.2.)
- [ ] Beams have at least 89 mm of bearing and joists at least 38 mm. Joists framed into a beam side sit in hangers or on ledger strips. (9.23.8.1., 9.23.9.1., 9.23.9.2.)
- [ ] Nailing follows Table 9.23.3.4. Every hanger hole is filled with the fastener the hanger maker specifies. (Table 9.23.3.4.)
- [ ] Wood within 150 mm of the ground, or exposed where moisture is trapped (moisture index over 1.00), is preservative-treated. (9.3.2.9.(3))
- [ ] **Ledger** is built exactly as the approved detail: fastener type, diameter, spacing and stagger, into the house rim joist, not just the cladding. Flashing and a drainage gap are in place. BCBC 2024 has no ledger schedule; BC Housing's best practice is 13 mm lag screws or through-bolts, staggered, spaced by joist span, with a treated ledger at least 38 × 184 mm. (BC Housing deck guide)
- [ ] The deck is designed for the specified roof snow load or 1.9 kPa, whichever is greater. Hot tubs, planters or a roof are shown on engineered drawings, not added afterward. (9.4.2.3.)
- [ ] Rough electrical for deck lights or receptacles is inspected under its own electrical permit before being covered.

Stage 3: Final

Book when the deck is substantially complete: decking, guards, stairs, handrails and grading done.

- [ ] Guards on every open side where the walking surface is more than 600 mm above the surface within 1.2 m, including stairs and landings. (9.8.8.1.)

- [ ] Guard height is at least 900 mm for an exterior guard serving one dwelling where the deck is no more than 1,800 mm above finished ground, otherwise 1,070 mm. Measure from the finished decking, and on stairs from a line through the tread nosings. (9.8.8.3.)
- [ ] No opening in the guard lets a 100 mm sphere through. The triangle under the bottom rail at the stair stops a 150 mm sphere. Check the ends of runs and the post gaps. (9.8.8.5.)
- [ ] Guards resist the loads in Table 9.8.8.2., so posts are solidly blocked and fastened. Non-climbable design is required only where the deck is more than 4.2 m above the level below. (Table 9.8.8.2., 9.8.8.6.)
- [ ] Glass in guards is safety glazing. In Vancouver, every glass guard has a top rail (VBBL 9.8.8.8.). In Victoria, frameless glass is Part 4 and needs an engineer, unless the inspector accepts ½ in. laminated tempered glass case by case at 1.8 m or less. (9.8.8.7.; Victoria glass guard bulletin)
- [ ] Stair rise is 125–200 mm and run 255–355 mm, uniform within the code tolerances. Width is at least 860 mm. (Tables 9.8.4.1., 9.8.4.2.; 9.8.4.4.; 9.8.2.1.)
- [ ] Handrail installed where the exterior stair has more than 3 risers (one is enough for a single dwelling), 865–1,070 mm high, and continuously graspable from bottom riser to top riser. (9.8.7.1., 9.8.7.2., 9.8.7.4.)
- [ ] Stringers meet the depth and spacing rules, and wood steps don’t touch the ground unless treated. (9.8.9.4., 9.8.9.3.)
- [ ] Exterior treads are slip resistant. Vancouver’s final inspection checks this. (Vancouver guide)
- [ ] Grading slopes away from the house, debris is removed, and the landing at the stair foot is in place.
- [ ] Any required engineer’s field review letters and the electrical final are done.

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City booking rules: Duncan, Victoria, Vancouver

City	Deck stages it lists	How and when to book
Duncan	Forms before pouring, framing, final (Building Bylaw 3254 s.14.1).	At least 48 hours’ notice (s.14.3). The inspector doesn’t have to come at the time you request (s.14.4). Callback fee $50. Bylaw (council agenda PDF) · fees
Victoria	Foundation (written for drain tile and dampproofing, so ask about deck footings),	At least 24 hours’ notice. Book through MyCity, the online form, email, phone (250-361-0344) or in person,

City	Deck stages it lists	How and when to book
	framing, final, plus surveyor certificates if your permit requires them.	by 4 p.m. the day before. The inspector confirms between 8 and 10 a.m. request an inspection · permit package
Vancouver	Tree barrier (if required), footings and forms before pouring, framing, final.	Online (applicant or contractor account) or 3-1-1. Requests before 2 p.m. are inspected the next business day. Cancel by 2 p.m. on a business day to avoid a charge. inspections · stages guide

Elsewhere in BC, check your own building department's inspection list. Our deck and shed permit rules by city page links the official pages for 14 places.

Vancouver: VBBL differences to check

- Cite the **Vancouver Building By-law 2025** on drawings, not the BCBC (VBBL 2025 Volume 2, PDF).
- **Glass guards need a top rail** (VBBL 9.8.8.8.).
- Guard heights (9.8.8.3.) use the wording "one dwelling unit or a single detached house", and the 900/1,070 mm split at 1,800 mm is the same.
- Pools more than 450 mm deep need a fence at least 1.5 m high (VBBL 9.8.8.1.(9)). See our fence checklist.
- The City's final inspection list says "guards are completed and are non-climbable". VBBL 9.8.8.6. only requires that above 4.2 m, so ask your inspector before choosing horizontal rails.

Why decks fail inspection

Across the city documents behind this checklist, the same problems come up again and again:

- concrete poured before the footing or forms inspection;
- decking laid over framing that hasn't been inspected;
- ledgers fastened into cladding, or with no flashing;
- guards that end up too low once the decking is on;
- gaps over 100 mm at posts and stair ends;
- uneven stair risers because the landing height wasn't planned.

Our step-by-step guides cover each one in detail: Duncan, Victoria and Vancouver, plus the general deck permit how-to for BC.

Related checklists: shed inspection checklist · fence checklist.

Frequently asked questions

What inspections does a deck need in BC?

Most BC building departments inspect a permitted deck at three stages: footings or forms before concrete is poured, framing before decking or skirting covers it, and a final. Duncan's Building Bylaw 3254 and

Vancouver's inspection stages guide list these stages. Victoria's list has no separate deck-footing stage, so ask your inspector. Your permit may add others, such as a surveyor's certificate or a tree barrier inspection.

What is the minimum deck guard height in BC?

Under BC Building Code 2024 Article 9.8.8.3., an exterior guard serving one dwelling must be at least 900 mm high where the walking surface is no more than 1,800 mm above finished ground, and 1,070 mm above that. Guards are required where the drop is more than 600 mm within 1.2 m (9.8.8.1.). Vancouver's VBBL uses the same heights.

Do I need to leave the framing open for the inspector?

Yes. The framing inspection has to happen before decking, skirting or anything else hides the posts, beams, joists, hangers and ledger fasteners. Covering uninspected work can mean removing it.

Does this checklist guarantee my deck will pass?

No. This checklist is a preparation aid, not a guarantee of passing inspection. Your inspector's decision and the current code and bylaw govern.

How much notice do I need to book a deck inspection?

Duncan requires at least 48 hours' notice and Victoria at least 24 hours (phone and email bookings by 4 p.m. the day before). In Vancouver, requests made before 2 p.m. are inspected the next business day. Other cities set their own rules.

Independent information only. This guide is a planning aid, not legal, engineering or building-code advice. Codes and bylaws change, and the building official for your address has the final say. Confirm every requirement before you design, apply or dig.

Sources and official links

This guide relies on the official pages below. Rules, fees and processes change, so check the authority before you apply or spend money.

- Province of BC: BC Building Code 2024
- Province of BC: BC Building Code 2024, web version revision 2 (PDF)
- City of Duncan: Building Bylaw No. 3254, 2026 (in the April 27, 2026 council agenda, PDF)
- City of Duncan: building department fees and charges (PDF)
- City of Victoria: request an inspection
- City of Victoria: building permit package information (PDF)
- City of Victoria: Required Inspections (PDF)
- City of Victoria: glass guards in Part 9 buildings (PDF)
- City of Vancouver: inspections
- City of Vancouver: Single Detached House or Duplex Inspection Stages Guide (PDF)

- City of Vancouver: Vancouver Building By-law
- City of Vancouver: VBBL 2025 Volume 2 (PDF)
- BC Housing: Building Safe and Durable Wood Decks and Balconies (PDF)

Links checked September 25, 2026. Found an error or a broken link? Report it.