



Railing Guide

Century Scenic Glass Railing

Call: 1-888-824-5316

Email: Support@DecksDirect.com

Maybe you're starting from scratch, or perhaps you're replacing an outdated or unsafe railing system. Whatever your layout, no matter how much knowledge you have of railing components, this guide is meant to provide all the information you need to select the right system for your needs.

Last Updated: May 2017



Westbury Veranda Glass Railing

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Getting Started

You've come to the right place

This information-packed guide is a great place to start learning more about deck railing. If you have any questions along the way, please don't hesitate to contact us. Give us a call at **1-888-824-5316**, send us an e-mail at support@DecksDirect.com or contact us via [Live Chat](#).

Largest Selection

Buy confidently knowing that DecksDirect only sells product from trusted manufacturers. From aluminum to glass railing systems, we carry manufacturers that are the best in the industry and are all available in one place, here at DecksDirect.

Let us help

Once you're ready, we can provide a free custom deck railing quote. Visit our website, tell us a little bit about you and your project, and let the railing specialists at DecksDirect do the rest. [Submit a quote request >](#)

Free Shipping

We offer free ground shipping on select railing within the contiguous U.S. Minimums may apply; see specific product pages for details.

Freight Shipping

Many railing items are too large and/or heavy to ship via the standard delivery methods such as Fedex or USPS. These items are generally shipped via LTL (Less than Truckload) Delivery and for larger orders, we ship via common carrier (18-wheeler). If your order is being shipped via LTL or common carrier, we will contact you to discuss the details before the order ships. To know what to expect with freight shipments, visit our freight shipping page. [DecksDirect freight shipping policy >](#)

100% Satisfaction Guarantee

Whether you ordered too much or you are not 100% satisfied, you can return all non-special order items to our warehouse for a full refund with no restocking fees. We want you to be satisfied and will work hard to ensure that you are. If you experience any issue with our products, customer service, shipping, or even if you just plain don't like what you bought, please let us know. Please visit our website for more information: www.decksdirect.com/returns.

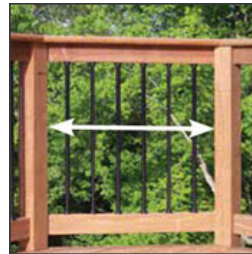


Trex Signature Aluminum Railing

Railing Terms



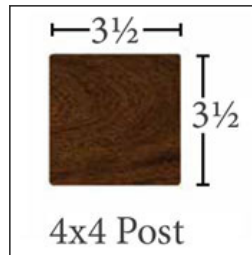
Blocking – Additional support between framing to accept post attachments.



Lineal Measurement – Straight line measurement (in feet and inches) of rail to be installed.



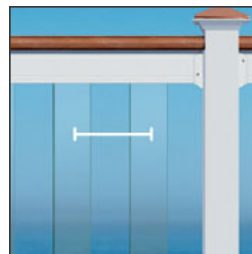
Bracket – The hardware that attaches a rail plate to the newel post. Typically available in adjustable or straight.



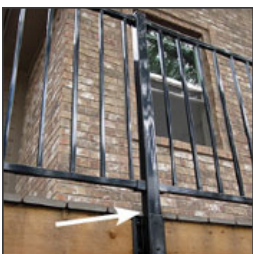
Nominal Dimensions – The nominal size of a post or board refers to its “named” size rather than its actual measurements. For example, a post called 4x4 actually measures 3-1/2” x 3-1/2”.



Fascia – The vertical board framing the perimeter of the deck.



On Center – This refers to the measurement from the center of one point to the next, such as 4” on center spacing between two 3/4” balusters - this results in an opening measurement of 3-1/4”.



Fascia-Mount Newel Posts – Posts that are affixed to the fascia board (on the outside of the decking surface). A similar option is a **joist-mount post** which is affixed to the side of a joist (deck boards then are installed around the post).



Post Sleeve – A decorative cover that slides over a structural interior post (typically a wood post).

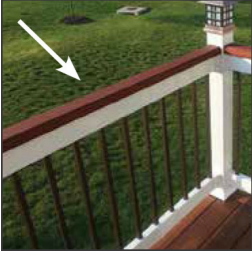


Graspable Hand Rail – An uninterrupted top rail or interior secondary handrail on a staircase or ramp. It is designed to provide a safety element that is easy to grip.



Post Skirt/Flare – A decorative trim piece that surrounds the base of a surface-mount post. Conceals fasteners that connect the post to the deck.

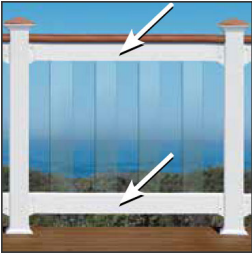
Railing Terms, *continued*



Rail Cap – A finishing element that adds a decorative profile above the top rail plate.



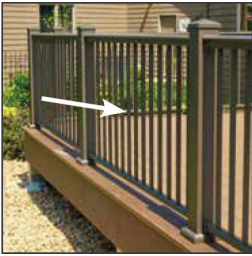
Railing Infill: Standard Balusters
Also known as pickets or spindles, these attach between the top and bottom rail plate.



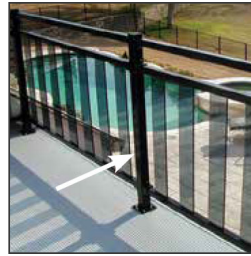
Rail Plates – Horizontal top and bottom structural boards, typically made of wood, composite, aluminum or steel, that form a connection between newel posts.



Structural Post – The main weight-bearing support posts that hold up the frame of the deck.



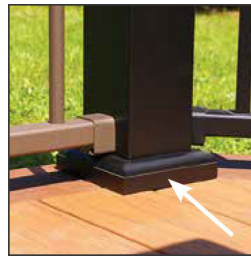
Railing Infill – Horizontal or vertical elements that fit between upper and lower rail plates, designed for safety, but are often chosen based on aesthetics.



Structural Newel Post – A post that on its own provides the strength required to satisfy code requirements or provide sufficient resistance for the rail system.



Railing Infill – Cable – Horizontal or vertical stainless steel cables.



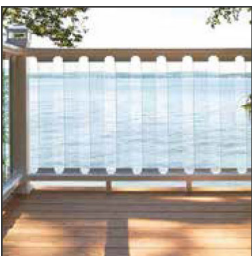
Surface-Mount Newel Posts – Posts that are attached to the deck surface.



Railing Infill: Face Mount Balusters
Pickets or spindles that attach to the front or back side of the rail plates.



Template/Installation Tool – A guide designed to simplify installation of rail brackets and hardware.



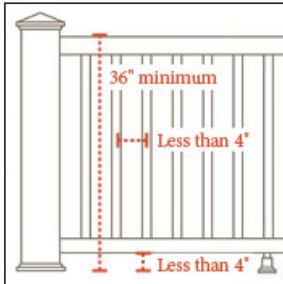
Railing Infill: Glass – Tempered or laminated material that provides unobstructed views from the deck. Available in panels or balusters, can also be face-mounted in some cases.



Things to Consider

Deckorators ALX Pro Railing with Glass Balusters

Know your code!



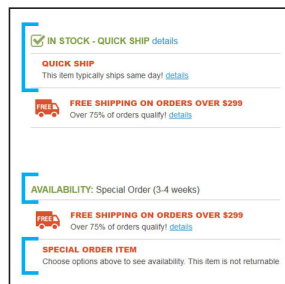
The first consideration in choosing deck railing is always safety. Before starting any deck project, contact your local building department for any and all applicable code requirements. These vary from state to state and even among municipalities, but typically are as follows:

- Baluster spacing -The opening between balusters should be less than four inches.
- Railing height - Required railing height can also vary from city to city. The most common minimum height requirements are 36 or 42 inches from the deck surface to the top of the railing. Contact your local building department for specifications regarding your project. Many municipalities updated their requirements in 2009 and 2010.

Budget

In order to accommodate many budgets, DecksDirect offers a wide variety of rail systems. If you have an idea what you'd like to spend per lineal foot of rail, contact one of our railing experts to discuss which material or manufacturer is best for your needs.

Time Frame



DecksDirect is the largest stocking dealer of deck railing. However, when offering a large variety of options, not all railing systems can be stocked at our warehouse. If your project deadline is fast approaching, it is best to choose from items that are in stock and can be shipped quickly to avoid disappointment. We include

details such as “Quick Ship” or “Special Order” on the specific product pages, and the expected shipping time will also display in your cart when you make a selection.

House's style/architecture

In our opinion, the railing is THE most important choice you will make when planning your deck. It will be noticed from near and far, for better or worse. The size, color and style of railing can have a dramatic impact on the look and feel of your deck, and can help it to blend with the rest of your home and yard. For the most aesthetic appeal, the railing should complement the other details of your home by being in proportion to them.

Experience level

The seasoned handyman will be able to tackle any system without difficulty and will not shy away from a system which requires assembly of individual top and bottom rail components, balusters, and connectors. On the other hand, a homeowner new to this type of project might have more success installing prefabricated panels or using a system that has predetermined baluster sizes, angles and locations with pre-installed baluster connectors.

Location (coastal or inland)

Exposure to saltwater and salty air can damage a number of rail systems. If you are within a mile of the coast, contact us to find out which systems are approved for the conditions in your area.

Exposure to sun/elements

Environmental factors can play a role in your railing's appearance and function. Choosing a black metal rail is not recommended for a deck that will be in full sun in a hot climate. A glass railing within reach of lawn sprinklers might look perpetually spotty, and glass balusters can magnify the sun's intensity (increasing the temperature on the deck surface) while cutting down on airflow.

Things to Consider, *continued*

Color preference



Not all rail styles are available in all colors, so keep that in mind if color is your most important feature. For example, if white is the desired color, it is good to start with styles offered in white. Some systems have components that can be mixed and matched to achieve a custom look, and you may consider choosing a color

or multiple colors to match or contrast with features on or around the home. Also, remember that the darker the color of the railing, the clearer the view through it will be.

All about the view – or lack of it



Railing not only controls your view from the deck, it also determines what your neighbors can see. Wide balusters and railing provide more privacy for a deck with a hot tub, whereas glass panels and cable railing invite views from all perspectives. As stated in the color section, choosing darker infill allows for easier viewing through a

rail section to the scenery beyond the deck.

Ideal post mounting application for the project

To maximize the available space on the deck surface, fascia mounting is a great option. Not all systems offer this type of post, so the traditional method of mounting to the horizontal deck surface might be required.

Additional blocking or structure

To ensure a stable connection between each post and frame, a solid block is needed. If the framing does not already have enough structure, added blocking is necessary to enhance stability.

Maintenance Matters

How much time do you really want to spend maintaining the look of your deck and its railing? Traditional wood rails are quite time- and labor-intensive to maintain, so choosing a different material can free up lots of time to enjoy the deck! Glass panels or balusters may require treatment to minimize spotting, but materials like metal and composite are virtually maintenance-free.

Available Accessories

Are you planning a railing with a simple, straightforward layout? Or is complex and embellished what you need? Each system has its own bracketry to accommodate angles and stairs, and some offer add-on enhancements such as cap rails for creating a unique look for your specific project.



TimberTech RadianceRail Composite Railing

Railing Materials



Aluminum Railing

Lightweight and durable, aluminum railing resists rust and corrosion—making it virtually maintenance-free for the life of the product. Aluminum is available in several colors and baluster shapes. DecksDirect offers aluminum railing systems from [Afco](#), Deckorators ([ALX Pro](#) & [ALX Classic](#)), [Fortress](#), Solutions, [Trex](#), and [Westbury](#). Also consider panel options from [Wild Hog](#).

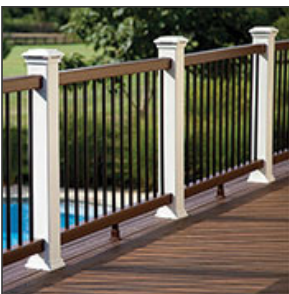
- Pros:** clean look, ease of install, can be used between any newel posts
Cons: modern look doesn't mesh with all architecture



Cable Railing

Constructed of 316 stainless steel, cables are available in 3/16" and 1/4" diameters but are most commonly used in 1/8" diameter. Nineteen thin cables are wound together to produce one durable and attractive cable. DecksDirect carries several [horizontal cable railing systems](#) as well as [vertical cable railing systems](#), plus we can quote a custom [Feeney DesignRail®](#) project.

- Pros:** unobstructed views, modern design, easy to install, low maintenance, customizable
Cons: more costly, may not meet code in certain areas



Cap-Stock Composite Railing

A wood-alternative material, composite rail contains plastic, recycled material and wood fibers. Cap-stock is the result of co-extruding composite material with an exterior shell, typically made of PVC. The inner substance provides durability; the outer coating is an attractive finish available in several colors. Find options from [AZEK](#), Deckorators ([CXT Pro](#) & [CXT Classic](#)), [TimberTech](#), and Trex ([Transcend](#) & [Select](#)).

- Pros:** durable finish, can't rust, can look similar to wood, high color retention, resists stains/fading
Cons: bulky, can appear heavy, looks similar to wood, moderately strong, labor-intensive install



Glass Railing

Allowing clear, unobstructed views, glass railings are tempered for safety. For minimal upkeep, glass can be treated to reduce water spotting. We offer several glass baluster and panel options, including choices from [Century](#), [InvisiRail](#), [Westbury](#), Fortress ([balusters + iron](#), [balusters + aluminum](#) & [panels + aluminum](#)), and Deckorators ([balusters + CXT](#) & [balusters + aluminum](#)).

- Pros:** unobstructed views, modern design
Cons: may require frequent cleaning, can be costly to ship, can increase temperature on deck surface

Railing Materials, *continued*



Steel Railing

Steel railing is a heavy-duty option that is great for replicating the look of wrought iron. DecksDirect offers the complete [Fortress FE26 Railing System](#), which features pre-welded panels that are amazingly strong and durable, without the hassle of separate parts and pieces.

Pros: strength, ease of install, panelized versions available, adjustable stair panels

Cons: possibility of rust, heavy to work with



Vinyl Railing

For low-cost, low-maintenance, no-frills railing, vinyl is an obvious choice. Lightweight and easy to install, its non-porous surface won't require painting or staining, though from a distance it can resemble painted wood. DecksDirect offers vinyl options from [Durables](#) and [Fairway](#).

Pros: price friendly, low maintenance, lightweight, simple installation

Cons: limited color options, can appear cheap, can become brittle in cold weather



Wood Railing

Traditional wood railings are still a popular choice, and the reasons are obvious: the stately, professional look is classic, elegant and economic. However, the very features that make wood so attractive also lead to time-consuming maintenance. Wood railings tend to damage more easily and require significantly more time to stain or paint on an annual basis. At this time, DecksDirect does not offer wood railings, though there are a number of aluminum and steel options that can be installed between wood newel posts.

Pros: natural look, inexpensive, can be painted or stained to match decking

Cons: high maintenance, susceptible to decay, warping and bowing, obstructed views



Railing Manufacturers

KeyLink Cable Railing

Pricing Key: pricing based on total railing cost for a 12ft x 16ft deck

\$\$\$\$\$ = \$500-\$1000

\$\$\$\$\$ = \$1001-\$1500

\$\$\$\$\$ = \$1501-\$2000

\$\$\$\$\$ = \$2001-\$3000

\$\$\$\$\$ = over \$3001



Afco Aluminum Railing is available in three high-gloss finishes and four textured finishes in multiple lengths and heights. Afco provides superior value as well unique design features. The 200 Series has a flat top rail that provides a convenient drink rail and the 125 Series offers a number of decorative mid-rail options.

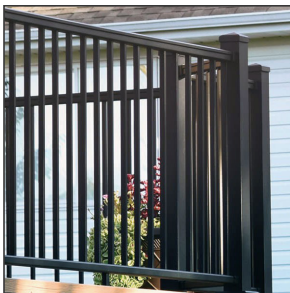
Afco 100 Series: \$\$\$\$

Afco 200 Series: \$\$\$\$



AGS Stainless provides a high-end custom look without the cost of custom fabrication, and eliminates on-site drilling for faster installation. As beautiful and safe indoors as it is on the deck, the ExpressRail system features fully-welded and pre-drilled components. Fittings are marine-grade and cable is electropolished for ultimate corrosion resistance and high shine. The final step is adding your own hardwood top rail for an upscale finished look.

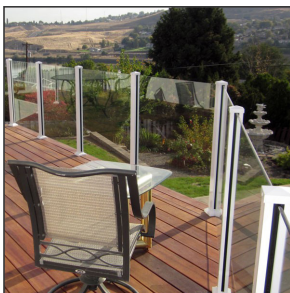
AGS Stainless ExpressRail: \$\$\$\$\$



AZEK is known for high-quality building products and DecksDirect is proud to carry some of their latest innovations in composite and aluminum railing from one of the largest manufacturers of building materials. Quality and beauty shine through in AZEK's classically designed railing, which is customizable through colorful post sleeves, caps, and top rails.

AZEK Premier Rail: \$\$\$\$\$

AZEK/TimberTech Impression Rail: \$\$\$\$\$



Century Aluminum Products offers the innovative Scenic Glass Railing system which is comprised of only powder-coated steel posts and large glass panels, making for a spectacular view with little maintenance needed. There is no need for top or bottom rails; grooved channels on the posts allow 10mm glass panels to slide in with ease. (Glass sold separately.)

Century Aluminum Rail: \$\$\$\$\$

Railing Manufacturers, *continued*

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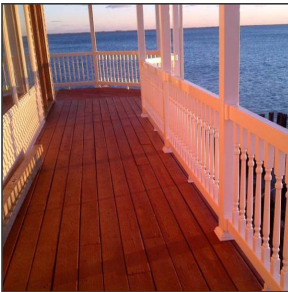
\$\$\$\$\$ = \$2001-\$3000

\$\$\$\$\$ = over \$3001



Deckorators was one of the first companies to produce several styles of balusters and accessories, which are now consistent best-sellers. Deckorators offers several full rail systems with complementary and compatible items that can be combined in countless ways.

- Deckorators ALX Classic: \$\$\$\$\$
- Deckorators ALX Pro: \$\$\$\$\$
- Deckorators CXT Classic: \$\$\$\$\$
- Deckorators CXT Pro: \$\$\$\$\$
- Deckorators CXT & Glass: \$\$\$\$\$
- Deckorators Aluminum & Glass: \$\$\$\$\$



Durables manufactures nine popular styles of sleek and sturdy vinyl railing. With a wide variety of infill styles, three classic colors and some commercially-compatible rail kits, they have the right product for you.

- Durables Waltham: \$\$\$\$\$
- Durables Brighton: \$\$\$\$\$
- Durables Dorset: \$\$\$\$\$
- Durables Westport: \$\$\$\$\$
- Durables Bradford: \$\$\$\$\$
- Durables Manchester: \$\$\$\$\$
- Durables Harrington: \$\$\$\$\$
- Durables Kirklees: \$\$\$\$\$
- Durables Ashington: \$\$\$\$\$



Evolve Aluminum Railing is an excellent complement for wood rails with its low maintenance design. Installation is easy, as all it entails is inserting panelized sections between your wood top and bottom rail. These simple, adjustable, clean and contemporary panels are available for level and stair configurations in three popular colors.

- Evolve Panels: \$\$\$\$\$



Fairway Vinyl Railing is known for engineering safe, eye-catching, and inventive railings. Fairway provides a large selection of rail infill options including square or turned vinyl, aluminum, or acrylic glass. With this many options, you are sure to find the perfect style for your home.

- Fairway LandMarke: \$\$\$\$\$
- Fairway Contour: \$\$\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$\$
- Fairway Contour GrandView: \$\$\$\$\$



Feeney is a name you can trust, since they've been producing outstanding architectural products for over sixty years. Installation can be as simple as combining pre-packaged kits with standard wood posts or as elaborate as a totally custom DesignRail® system using a wide variety of fittings and powder-coated aluminum rail.

- Feeney CableRail: \$\$\$\$\$
- Feeney DesignRail® Kits: \$\$\$\$\$
- Feeney DesignRail® System: \$\$\$\$\$

Railing Manufacturers, *continued*

Pricing Key: pricing based on total railing cost for a 12ft x 16ft deck

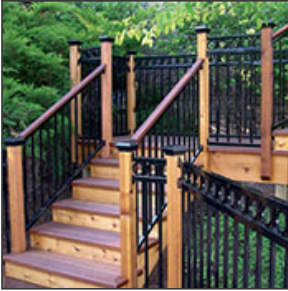
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\$\$\$\$\$ = over \$3001



Fortress Railing Products brings several outstanding railing systems to the marketplace, each with a unique style and benefits. Sturdy steel pre-welded panels allow for quick installation of the FE26 system, while Pure View glass balusters won't block your view. Find additional variety with aluminum components and decorative top rail options.

Fortress FE26 Iron: \$\$\$\$\$

Fortress Vertical Cable: \$\$\$\$\$

Fortress FE26 & Glass: \$\$\$\$\$

Fortress AL13 Aluminum: \$\$\$\$\$

Fortress AL13 & Glass: \$\$\$\$\$

Fortress AL13 Full Panel Glass: \$\$\$\$\$



InvisiRail offers ultimate convenience with its innovative Glass Railing System. Order the entire rail system all in one place for delivery to your home or jobsite; there's no need to source glass elsewhere. The system features thin posts and brackets, which are hardly noticeable. For customization, brackets can install into wood posts. Either way, your view will take center stage thanks to InvisiRail.

InvisiRail Glass: \$\$\$\$\$



KeyLink cable railing is a unique and innovative railing system that is customizable to your specifications. KeyLink's system features end posts with pre-installed tensioner fittings, and top rail kits with pre-drilled balusters, for quick and simple installation. The cable infill is razor thin at only 1/8" meaning you'll always have a great view. Additional tools and hardware are available to complete the job.

KeyLink Cable: \$\$\$\$\$



Prestige is a relative newcomer to the market, but has steadily grown in popularity with its modern, low-profile rail system that you can choose to upgrade with drink rail. Swivel brackets make stair rail installation simple, and the four textured finishes are neutral yet distinct enough to complement any decor. Cable infill is also available for a special upgrade.

Prestige Aluminum: \$\$\$\$\$

Prestige Aluminum & Cable: \$\$\$\$\$



Solutions has a long-standing tradition of providing durable powder-coated aluminum rail systems to homeowners and contractors across the country. Multiple rail heights make the system suitable for residential or commercial applications, and over-the-post and fascia-mount options make it very versatile.

Solutions Aluminum: \$\$\$\$\$

Railing Manufacturers, *continued*

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TimberTech, an industry leader known for quality, innovation, and performance, has elevated consumer expectations for composite rail systems with outstanding products and coordinating lighting. A variety of products accommodate multiple price points and experience levels.

TimberTech Evolutions Builder: \$\$\$\$\$

TimberTech/AZEK Impression Rail: \$\$\$\$\$

TimberTech RadianceRail: \$\$\$\$\$

TimberTech RadianceRail & Cable: \$\$\$\$\$

TimberTech RadianceRail Express: \$\$\$\$\$

TimberTech Evolutions Contemporary: \$\$\$\$\$

TimberTech Evolutions & Cable: \$\$\$\$\$



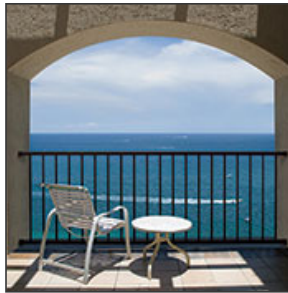
Trex pioneered the wood-alternative decking industry, and now its product line has expanded to include a plethora of railing options made with the same precision and care. Composite options can coordinate or contrast with Trex's high-end decking finishes, or the aluminum

Signature line can be used to preserve a beautiful view.

Trex Select: \$\$\$\$\$

Trex Transcend: \$\$\$\$\$

Trex Signature: \$\$\$\$\$



Westbury Aluminum Railing combines beauty, strength, and engineering. The outcome is a durable, easy to install railing system that enhances the visual appeal of your deck or porch. Westbury offers a variety of high-quality powder-coated aluminum finishes to provide the

perfect finishing touch.

Westbury Veranda Glass: \$\$\$\$\$

Westbury Riviera Aluminum: \$\$\$\$\$

Westbury Montego Aluminum: \$\$\$\$\$

Westbury Tuscany Aluminum: \$\$\$\$\$

Westbury VertiCable: \$\$\$\$\$



Wild Hog Railing produces high-quality railing panels that are attractive and affordable. Featuring a 6-gauge welded 4"x4" mesh infill or a heavy-duty .375" thick woven mesh, these panels promote safety without obstructing the view. Wild Hog products are made in the USA by

professional craftspeople dedicated to excellence.

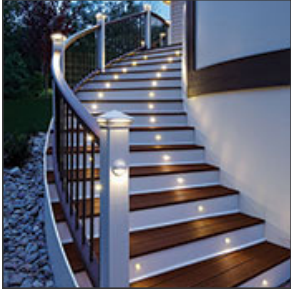
Wild Hog Standard: \$\$\$\$\$

Wild Hog Tahoe: \$\$\$\$\$



The Difference is in the Details

Westbury Tuscany Railing with Fortress Accents Post Cap Lights



Lighting

You're putting lots of time and money into your rail system, so why not maximize the hours you can see and use it? DecksDirect offers a wide variety of lighting – including many options from the same trusted railing manufacturers. Add lighting under the top rail for a subtle enhancement, or dress up every post with decorative post cap lights.

[View our selection of deck lighting >](#)

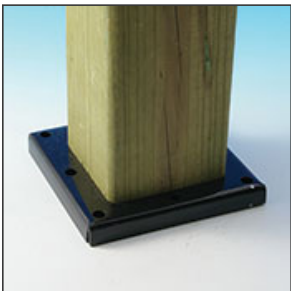
[Read our guide about adding deck lighting >](#)



Fasteners

Structural screws manufactured by GRK are a major step up from traditional lags and carriage bolts. With a variety of lengths and sizes, the self-drilling tips make for easy driving, plus the smaller shaft diameter results in less splitting than traditional structural fasteners.

[View our selection of deck fasteners >](#)

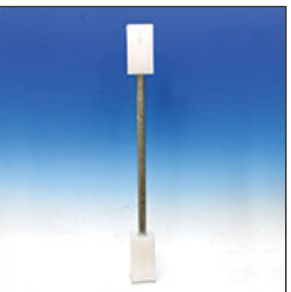


Post Anchors

Post anchors are a simple and sturdy method for securing wood newel posts to the deck surface. Rather than using unsightly brackets or bolting posts from underneath the deck, post anchors such as those from Titan have a low profile and are easily covered by many post sleeves or post skirts from popular railing lines. OZCO post anchors offer a more decorative, rustic look.

[View Titan Wood Post Anchors >](#)

[View OZCO post anchors >](#)



Structural Posts

You can use structural post inserts to utilize aluminum, composite or vinyl post sleeves without the hassle of installing wood posts. Structural post inserts are lightweight yet sturdy, and using them will save you a trip to the lumber yard.

[View structural posts >](#)



Purchasing Checklist

Trex Select Composite Railing

From concept to completion, we're here to help at every step of your process. Use this checklist to ensure you're not overlooking any vital components for an amazing railing.

Measure

Measure twice, order once! Make sure you have accurate deck measurements from which to create your materials list. Jot these numbers down and make a quick sketch of the space. Don't worry if it's not a professional drawing, a simple sketch will help when deciding what materials are needed.

Choose a Railing

DecksDirect offers a wide variety of railing choices! Read our Things to Consider section in this railing guide for tips on choosing the perfect railing.

Plan

Plan your newel post layout according to the rail lengths available in your selected rail system. (Be sure to look at actual lengths of rail sections. Because some systems use "on center" measurements, 6' and 8' doesn't always mean 72" and 96".) Then, add these posts and rail sections to your sketch.

Choose Posts

Are the posts for your selected system structural or sleeves? If structural, do you have bolts for attaching to the deck surface? Consider GRK Rugged Structural Screws.

If they are sleeves, do you have an attachment method for your wood interior posts? The Titan Wood Post Anchor is a handy, sturdy solution. Or, consider using a Structural Post Insert instead of a wood post.

Posts for level rail are shorter than the posts that are used at the midpoints or bottoms of staircases. You will have options with most brands for multiple lengths.

Choose Post Caps

If your railing system does not include post caps and you are planning a post-to-post style rail, select your post caps. DecksDirect lists post caps according to the size of the opening of the cap. If you have a 4" post, look for a cap that is 4-1/16" or larger. Many railing manufacturers have post caps designed specifically for their systems.

[View post cap options here >](#)

Choose Post Skirts

If your railing system does not include post skirts, select your post skirts/flares to cover the attachment of the post to the deck. Most often you will choose the post skirt that is designed specifically for your railing system.

Choose Level Rail Kits

Try to order your rail sections close to the length of sections on your deck for cost effectiveness. You can often cut a section and use it for two sections on your deck, i.e (1) 8' section can usually be cut into (2) 4' sections. Doing so requires an extra rail hardware kit.

Choose Stair Rail Kits

Rail manufacturers differ in how these are sold, so check which systems are manufactured at a fixed angle and which are adjustable, then determine which of those options work best for you. Some manufacturers offer both options. Find out if the system you chose meets graspable handrail requirements. If it does not, or if you have a center post on your stair rail that interrupts the handrail from being continuous, a secondary graspable handrail may need to be installed.

[View handrail options here >](#)

Additional Brackets

Order any additional brackets that you may need for angles or split rail sections.

Hardware

Most posts do not include fastening hardware. The type of fastener needed depends on the surface to which the railing will be fastened. To attach railing to a wood or composite deck with blocking you'll need long structural screws. Installation on a concrete patio requires concrete structural screws.

[View hardware options here >](#)

Lighting

Lighting is a great way to add visual interest and safety. If your deck has stairs, lighting is required by the International Residential Code (IRC). Some railing manufacturers offer a line of lighting that integrates seamlessly with railing components.

[View all lighting options here >](#)



Frequently Asked Questions

Prestige Aluminum Railing

Got a question about deck railings or installation? We've assembled our customers' most common questions below. If you don't find what you're looking for, just call us at 1-888-824-5316, 7am to 5:30pm CST, M-F.

General FAQs

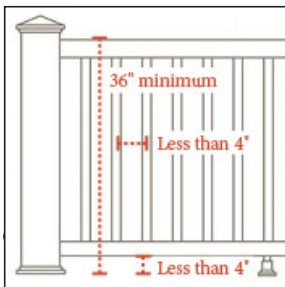
➔ Do I have to install rails on my deck? Or is that just required if I have children?

Railing may be required for your deck depending on your location. Codes vary greatly from state to state, so you should always check with your local building department before installing or updating a deck and/or balusters. In general, the International Residential Code (IRC) requires a deck, porch, or balcony to have a structural railing installed in order to pass a home inspection. For child safety, the balusters must be spaced less than 4" apart.

➔ How much does railing cost?

The cost of railing cost can vary quite a bit depending on project size/complexity and the material. The team at DecksDirect is happy to walk you through your options to find the perfect railing to fit both your space and budget.

➔ What is code for deck railing height?

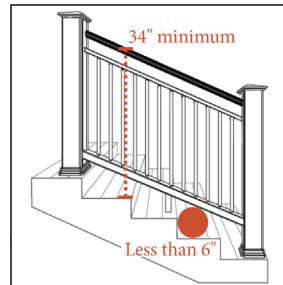


The IRC requires guardrails to be at least 36" in height measured from the deck surface to the top of the rail. Commercial decks attached to multifamily buildings regulated under the International Building Code (IBC) require 42" high guardrails.

➔ Do I need to meet code if I am not having my deck inspected?

By law, all railing must be inspected. Railing inspection codes are in place to ensure your safety and security. Regardless of whether you are having your work inspected, we strongly recommend building to code to ensure your deck is a safe place for family and friends.

➔ How do I meet height and gapping code requirements on stairs?



For straight railing, the IRC requires guardrails to be at least a 36" railing height. Stair railing is a bit different and must be 34" high, which is measured from the nosing of the stair tread to the top of the rail. Another exception for stairs is that you are allowed a larger opening for the triangle formed between the stair riser, stair tread, and bottom edge of the bottom rail. This open space may not allow a 6" sphere to pass through it.

➔ What's a structural post vs. a post sleeve?



A structural post is a post that on its own provides the strength required to satisfy code requirements or provide sufficient resistance for the rail system. A post sleeve is a decorative cover that slides over a structural interior post (typically a wood post). The image at left shows a structural wood 4x4 post surrounded by a decorative composite post sleeve.

➔ Do you have any light fixtures that match the finish of my railing?

Colors within one brand will always match. If the railing manufacturer you choose doesn't make lighting, there may still be options that match or are similar. The knowledgeable and friendly team at DecksDirect is happy to walk you through what your options are, simply give us a call at 1-888-824-5316.

➔ Why should I use taller posts at the bottom of my stairs?

Because of the angle at which the rails meet the posts, you will need to have taller posts at the bottom of stair rails. This includes landings that connect two stair railing sections. If you do not have a taller post, your rail will meet the post at too high of a point to connect a rail bracket.

FAQs, continued

Railing FAQs

➔ Does CableRail meet building codes?

Building codes vary by location, so it's best to check with your local building department before installing or updating your deck.

➔ Do I need to have lighting on my steps?



Yes. The 2000 IRC introduced a requirement for illumination of all stairways in residential buildings.

The code states that exterior stairways shall be provided with an artificial light source located in the immediate vicinity of the top landing of the stairway, including the landings and treads. As always, check your local

building codes and consult your building inspector prior to installation.

➔ Do I need to have railing on my steps?

Guard rails must be provided on the open side of a stair where it is more than 30" above the floor or grade.

➔ What angle should my deck stairs be?

Code has allowances between 31°-38°, which makes sense because the angle of your stairs varies based on the deck height and elevation. Most fixed angle stair rails are built for a 34°-35° slope and you can adjust the rise and run of your stairs to fall within these specification. Many manufacturers offer adjustable stair rails which are great for the ease of install as well as those more extreme stair angles.

➔ How far can I span between posts?

DecksDirect sells railing that is produced in sections from 4' to 10' wide. Railing manufacturers are required to do testing on their products, so if it is offered in 10' sections then it has been tested to meet these safety requirements.

➔ Can I install railing onto a concrete patio?



Yes! In some cases it's as easy as purchasing a concrete bit and concrete structural screw. In many cases you will want to use washers and even gaskets.

➔ Will my metal railing rust?

DecksDirect offers metal railings in both aluminum and steel. Aluminum doesn't rust while steel may rust if it is not properly powder-coated. All of the steel railings we offer are powder-coated so you should not have to worry about rusting. If you do cut your railing system, you will want to use touch-up paint to seal the cut line.

➔ What is composite?

Composite is a combination of polymer resins and premium recycled wood fiber resulting in a product that exhibits the best qualities from both materials. The resins shield the inner material from damage-causing insects and moisture and protect the wood from UV damage, while the fibrous material provides stability, durability and traction.

Shipping & Delivery FAQs

➔ How is railing shipped?



Many railing items are too large and/or heavy to ship via the standard delivery methods such as FedEx or USPS. These items are generally shipped via LTL (Less than Truckload) Delivery and for larger orders, we ship via common carrier (18-wheeler). If your order is being shipped via LTL or common carrier, you will

be contacted to discuss the details before the order ships. Please visit our freight shipping page for more info: www.decksdirect.com/freight-shipping

➔ How much does shipping cost?

Calculate Shipping

COUNTRY *
United States

STATE * ZIP *

Please select region *

CALCULATE

You're only \$79.03 away from receiving FREE SHIPPING for this order.

DecksDirect offers free ground shipping on select railing products within the continental U.S. Minimums may apply; see specific product page for details. For orders that do not qualify for free shipping, our shipping fees are based on package weight, dimensions, and distance being shipped. Shipping quotes can

be calculated in the shopping cart portion of our website, and keep in mind that larger items which require freight shipping will have a flat fee of \$199 until the minimum order amount is met.



Our Story

DecksDirect was founded in 2003 with the goal of creating a better deck building experience for both the professional builder and the do-it-yourselfer. Our family-owned business is based in Minnesota and we are proud to have assembled an outstanding team with wide-ranging industry experience. We understand the pleasures of outdoor living – not to mention the satisfaction that comes from building a deck your family or client will enjoy for years.

Our Mission

We are passionate about decks – it's what we do and we do it well! Whether you are a weekend warrior or a seasoned professional, we hope to share our passion and knowledge with you so that you can have the best deck building experience possible.

Contact Us

We're here to help, so don't hesitate to contact us!

Phone (7am-5:30pm CST, Monday–Friday)

Toll Free: 1-888-824-5316

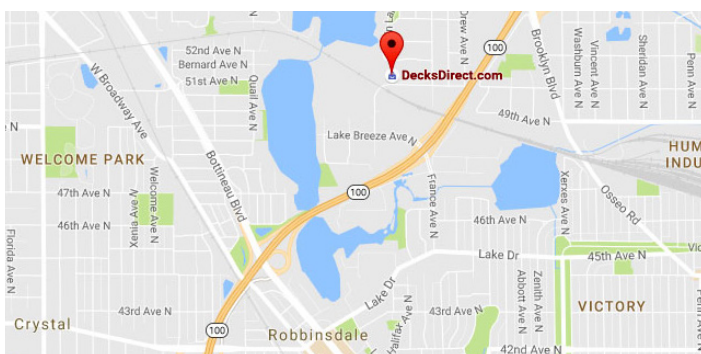
Local: 952-746-7561

Email: Support@DecksDirect.com

Fax: 1-888-256-5848

Visit Us:

3900 50th Ave. N. #100, Minneapolis, MN 55429
Showroom | Display Decks | Consultations | Order Pickup



The DecksDirect Difference

Passion to Impress

At DecksDirect.com, we're dedicated to helping people build better decks. When you choose DecksDirect.com, you get our entire team of specialists at your service – for free. Every single one of our team members is passionate about decks, and it shows!

Personalized Service

Behind our fancy website is a team of real people dedicated to helping people build better decks. We strive to exceed your expectations by providing honest, accurate, and friendly service that you can trust. Whether you need a railing color sample or a full quote for a two-level deck, you'll get reliable, hands-on support that's second to none. To learn more about who we are, meet the team, or read real customer reviews, visit our About Us page: <http://www.decksdirect.com/about>

Nation's Largest Specialty Retailer

We work hard to help you efficiently get what you need for your premium deck project. Don't worry about searching for parts across multiple retailers; we have what you need and our site is designed to guide you through the ordering process. We've done our homework on the industry trends, best products, and newest items to make them easily accessible for you. Because we're the nation's largest stocking online retailer of deck accessories, you can trust that many items ship the same day if the order is placed by 3:30pm CST, Monday–Friday.

Delivery is Fast & Free



We offer Free Ground Shipping for all railing systems once a minimum order value is met. Not only that, we go the extra mile when packaging and shipping the product. We are able to ship many items in easy-to-handle boxes, but larger items and full rail systems typically require a specially wrapped pallet. We take extra care to prepare and document the shipment to minimize damage in transit so you can receive your product and get it installed!