

Parts of a Deck

Structural parts of a deck include posts, beams, ledgers, and joists. They support and distribute the weight of the deck. For economy and durability, use pressure-treated lumber for these parts (and most building codes require it). The other parts of a deck include the decking, facing, railings, and stairway. Use redwood or cedar for these visible parts.

Ledgers anchor an attached deck to a house. Ledgers support one end of all joists.

Concrete footings with post anchors support the weight of the deck and hold the deck posts in place. They are made by pouring concrete into tube forms. Local climates and building codes determine depth of footings. **Post anchors** should be made of galvanized steel to resist corrosion.

Posts transfer the weight of the deck to the footings. They are attached to the post anchors with galvanized nails.

Beams provide the main structural support for the deck. A beam is usually made from a pair of 2 × 8s or 2 × 10s fastened to the deck posts.

Joists support the decking. For an attached deck, the joists are fastened at one end to the **ledger**, and at the other end to the **header joist**. The **outside joists** can be covered with redwood or cedar **facing** boards for appearance.

Decking is the main feature of any deck. The decking boards are attached to the joists with galvanized screws or nails.

Railing parts include **railing posts** and **balusters** attached to the header and outside joists, a horizontal **rail**, and a **cap**. Building codes may require railings on decks 24" or more above ground level.

A stairway is made from a pair of **stringers** fastened to the side of the deck, and a series of **treads** attached to the stringers with metal cleats.

