



CITY OF MORRO BAY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
955 Shasta Avenue
Morro Bay, CA 93442

BUILDING DIVISION COMMUNITY MEMO

DATE: April 01, 2023

TO: Contractors & Owners

FROM: Chad A. Ouimet

SUBJECT: STAIRS, RAMPS, DECKS, PORCHES, & GUARD PROTECTION

As a public service, we have compiled some common residential projects that typically require permits and wish to provide a guide to the permitting process.

APPLICABILITY:

One-and Two-Family Residences & Townhomes not exceeding three (3) stories.

ZONING CLEARANCE:

Structures exceeding 18 inches above grade will require a site plan for zoning clearance. Site standards within the designated zoning classification must comply even if building permits are required or not. Please contact Gabby Cortez @ 805-772-6270 or gcotez@morrobayca.gov for additional information or planning questions.

WORK EXEMPT FROM PERMIT:

Exterior decks, ramps, porches, and gazebos that do not exceed 200 square feet in area. Gazebos must not exceed 120 square feet in area, they are not more than 30 inches above grade at any point, are not attached to a dwelling and do not serve a required egress door.

LICENSED PROFESSIONALS AND ENGINEERING:

Signed and stamped plans with structural calculations are required for all the following:

- 1.) Standing surfaces exceeding 10 feet measured vertically above the ground at any point.
- 2.) Non-conventional construction and cantilevered projections as determined by the Building or Fire official.
- 3.) Any glass balustrade or other glass guard systems.
- 4.) Properties containing more than four (4) dwelling units.

Memo: 006_Stairs, Ramps, Decks, Porches, & Guard Protection_04/12/2023

OVER THE COUNTER PERMITS:

Over the counter permits will not be accepted.

One of the Building Divisions most frequently asked questions or disputes in the field is defining the extent of repairs to decks, landings, and stairs. I will provide clarity and implement policy going forward.

Exterior decks are an important component of the life safety and egress system of your home. They are designed to provide a means of escape for occupants and allow first responders the ability to reach your family in an emergency. Fall protection standards are also mandated in the building codes for these elements and require oversight and inspection.

Repairs to life safety egress components such as elevated decks, stairs, guardrails, handrails, or landings are limited to non-structural maintenance such as paint and paint prep or minor cosmetic repairs will not require a permit.

Any repair, replacement, or re-building of handrails, guardrails, landings, stair stringers, or modifications to the walking surfaces, will require a permit.

Please contact the Planning and Building divisions before you start your project.