



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

TO: Development Services Customers

SUBJECT: **INFORMATION BULLETIN 151**
Residential Deck Permits

DATE: October 1, 2008
Revised February 23, 2012/September 13, 2017/March 7, 2023

CREATED BY: Plan Review Division

Purpose:

As a customer service initiative, the City of San Antonio (CoSA) Development Services Department (DSD) has developed this **revised** Information Bulletin (IB) to describe the process and the minimum requirements for permitting covered or uncovered residential decks. The bulletin has been revised to provide information regarding online application and permitting, submittal of electronic documents, and online inspection requirements.

Scope:

Uncovered or Covered Residential Decks are required to be permitted when:

- The deck or the covered roof exceeds 300 square feet in area or,
- The deck is more than 30 inches above grade at any point

Design

A deck of any size may be designed by an Engineer or Architect licensed by the State of Texas, or a non-engineered/architected design may follow requirements utilizing the latest adopted version of the [International Residential Code](#) Section R507 and [DCA 6 Prescriptive Residential Deck Guidelines published by American Wood Council](#).

Application for New Decks – built with a new home

If the residential deck is to be constructed as part of, and at the same time as the new one-family or two-family dwelling, the applicant should include the deck as part of the **Residential Building Permit Application** in the BuildSA portal. A new residential application is further described in [Information Bulletin \(IB\) 101](#). The construction documents submitted for the one- and two-family dwelling must include the residential deck design details (i.e., footings, decking, stairs, handrails, guards, joist spans, etc.) to clearly show code compliance and will be reviewed as part of the residential building permit.

Application for New Decks – Existing Homes

Where there is an existing home on a lot the application to DSD for a permit to construct a deck, is submitted using the Accela Citizen Access portal ([BuildSA online Customer Portal](#)).

- Small Decks - Submittals for decks 1,000 square feet and less, AND only one story, use the **Residential Improvements Permit Application** in the BuildSA portal.
- Large Decks - Submittals for decks over 1,000 square feet, OR two-story decks, use the **Residential Building Permit Application** in the BuildSA portal.

Once logged into the BuildSA Customer portal (creating a portal account is required first), the DSD applications are under the Building tab from the main page, and as in the list shown below, click on “Create an Application”. Smaller one-story decks use the Residential Improvements Permit, while the larger and/or two-story decks use the Residential Building Permit

The screenshot shows the BuildSA Customer portal interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Home, Land Development, **Building**, and Fire. Below these is a search bar with three buttons: Search Applications, **Create an Application**, and Schedule an Inspection. Underneath is a section titled "Select a Record Type" with a search input field and a Search button. A list of application types follows, each with a radio button. Two items are highlighted with red boxes: "Residential Building Permit Application" and "Residential Improvements Permit Application".

<input type="radio"/> Annual Maintenance Permit Application	<input type="radio"/> MEP Trade Permits Application
<input type="radio"/> Building Move Application	<input type="radio"/> Minor Building Repair Application
<input type="radio"/> Building-Related-Fire Codes Appeals-Advisory Board	<input type="radio"/> Preliminary Plan Review - Building
<input type="radio"/> Certificate of Occupancy Application	<input type="radio"/> Residential Building Permit Application
<input type="radio"/> Commercial Project Application	<input type="radio"/> Residential Fence Application
<input type="radio"/> Demolition Pedestrian Protection Application	<input type="radio"/> Residential Improvements Permit Application
<input type="radio"/> Fire Damage Assessment Request	<input type="radio"/> Sidewalk-Curb Application
<input type="radio"/> LSR MEP Permit Application	<input type="radio"/> Sign Permit Application
<input type="radio"/> Manufactured Home Application	<input type="radio"/> Tree Affidavit/Permit Application

A homeowner may apply for any covered or non-covered deck, for either a large deck, or a small deck. During either application, the homeowner would check that you are applying as the property owner/homeowner and certify that you will be living in the home for more than 12 months. If you will be selling the home in the short term, a licensed contractor is required to apply for permits.

Small Decks

While filling out the Residential Improvements Permit Application, a screen titled “Residential Improvement Type” will be filled out. On this screen as shown below, choose “Deck” if the deck is to be uncovered. Choose “Covered Patio or Covered Porch” if the deck will be covered. Do NOT check both, or you will receive two permits rather than one.

Residential Improvement Type

RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENT TYPE
You may apply for more than one permit on this application. Each permit will issue a separate permit number.

Accessory including Shed or Garage:

Carport:

Covered Patio or Covered Porch:

Deck:

Home Addition:

Swimming Pool or Spa:

Pick one or the other:
 Covered
 Patio or Non-Covered
 Deck

Uploading of Documents for Small Decks

Small Decks - Uploading of electronic plans/documents for a smaller deck (under 1,001 sq ft/one story) is done during the application process for a residential improvement permit application. See screen shot below.

Required Electronic Documents (pdf format preferred):

- a) A detailed site plan and construction details
- b) Easement locations, size of lot, footing dimensions, decking material types, to include foundation specifications, elevations, connections, structural beam anchorage, vertical/lateral attachments, guardrail details, stair design, beam sizes, etc.

Attachment

To upload a new document click Add.
 The maximum file size allowed is 500 MB
 ade;adp;bat;chm;cmd;com;cpl;exe;hta;htm;html;ins;isp;jar;js;jse;lib;lnk;mde;mht;mhtml;msc;msp;mst;php;

Name	Type	Size	Latest Update
No records found.			

Add

Save and resume later

Once submitted, approval of the application normally is within one to two days. There may be a zoning review or an Office of Historic Preservation review depending on the property location. Approval of the application then issues a building permit with its own record number.

Large Decks

While filling out the Residential Building Permit Application, on the “General Information” screen, and under the Type of Residential Permit Application, choose the “Accessory Structures and Additions” sub-type. Then provide detailed information in the Scope of Work. The amount of impervious cover is normally just the size of the deck:

The sub-type of application is the “Accessory Structure”. Later in the application the applicant will choose deck for non-covered, or Covered Patio for a covered deck. For large decks, plan review of the application and documents are required including payment of a plan review fee.

General Information

GENERAL INFORMATION

Please choose the type of Residential Building Permit that you are applying for. A Residential Building Permit will Accessory Dwelling Unit and Foundation Only permits will be issued for accessory structures and additions and w

* Type of Residential Permit Application:

--Select--

--Select--

New Residential Home

Accessory Structure and Additions

Accessory Dwelling Unit

Prototype Plan for Future Homes

Foundation Only

A New Residential Home includes a duplex, townhome or a subdivision mo or 2-story). An Accessory Dwelling Unit is for second living spaces on an es conversions). A Prototype Plan will not have a site review or issue a permit t House Move permit.

* Scope of Work:

Custom Fields

STRUCTURES/ADDITIONS DETAILS

Type of Accessory structure: *

Deck

--Select--

Accessory including Shed or Garage

Carport

Covered Patio or Covered Porch

Deck

Home Addition

Does the scope of work include electrical, mechanical or plumbing?: *

What is the square footage of this accessory building (shed garage etc.)?: *

1000

What is the total square feet of all existing accessory buildings on the lot?: *

A "granny flat", living space above a garage, or any other attached or detached second dwelling unit on the lot required the appl restroom facilities and room for sleeping.

Is this accessory building being finished out on the inside and include insulation?:

Yes No

Will this accessory structure remain with exposed studs, no insulation, and no sheetrock?: *

Yes No

Uploading of Documents for Large Decks

Large Decks: For a larger deck over 1,000 sq. ft. or a 2-story design, uploading electronic plans/documents are done after the application is submitted. When the applicant receives the Application record number after Submit, the next step is to upload documents into the Plan Room in preparation for a review for completeness. Once you receive the screen below with the application record number, use the blue “Upload Plans and Documents” button as shown below to start the process of uploading files.

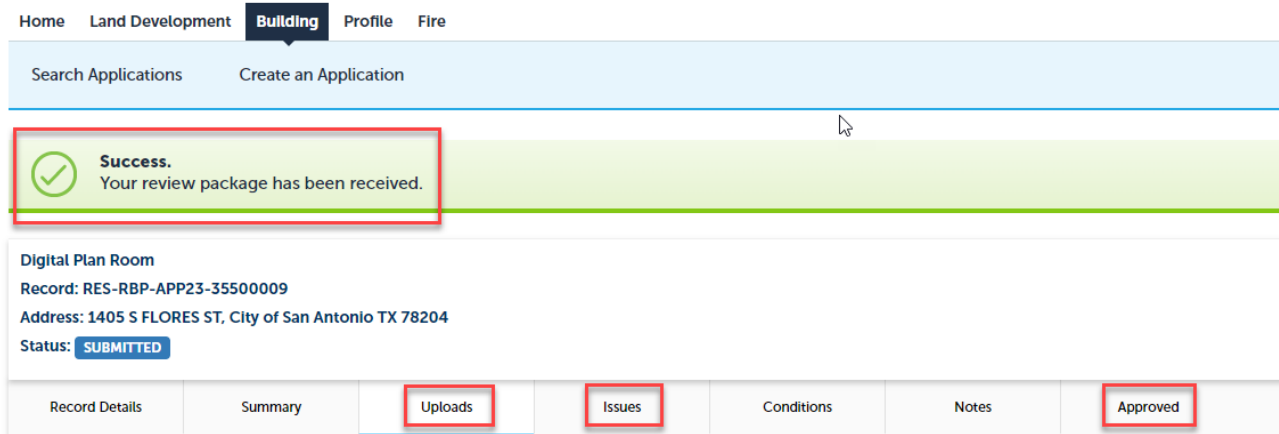
The first City review is for Completeness of the documents submitted. Please be aware, the City is not made aware of the application until the documents are uploaded and Completeness is assigned. Upon approval of the Completeness Review, then Plan Review fees are accessed, and invoices sent to the customer to pay on-line. Plan Review starts once the payment of the plan review fees are made.

Required Electronic Documents (pdf format preferred):

- a) Detailed site plans drawn to scale including all existing structures, setbacks, easements, and size of lot
- b) Engineered/Architect details and design to include foundation specifications, elevations, connections, structural beam anchorage, vertical/lateral attachments, guardrail details, stair design, beam sizes, etc.

The screenshot shows a web interface for a building permit application. At the top, there is a navigation menu with 'Home', 'Land Development', 'Building' (highlighted), 'Profile', and 'Fire'. Below the menu are two buttons: 'Search Applications' and 'Create an Application'. The main heading is 'Residential Building Permit Application'. A progress bar shows six steps: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 'Review' (highlighted in green), and 6 'Record Issuance'. A green notification box with a checkmark icon states: 'Your application has been successfully submitted. Please print your record confirmation and retain a copy for your records. An E-mail might also be sent regarding your request.' Below this, a red-bordered box contains the text: 'Thank you for using our online services. Your Record ID is RES-RBP-APP23-35500009.' Underneath, it says: 'You will need this Record ID to check the status of your application or to schedule/check results of inspections. Please print a copy of your record for your files.' A section titled 'To upload your digital plans, specifications, or other supporting documents for review, please click below:' features a blue button labeled 'Upload Plans and Documents' which is also highlighted with a red border. At the bottom, contact information for the City of San Antonio Development Services Department is provided, including the address (1901 South Alamo Street, San Antonio, TX 78204), phone number (210.207.1111), hours (7:45 am - 4:30 pm Mon - Fri), and a note that they are closed on city holidays. A blue button labeled 'View Record Details »' is located at the bottom left.

Please be aware, upload of files are not complete until the following screen is shown:



After a Completeness Review and payment of Plan Review fees, Technical review of the large decks start and are normally 2-3 days for the first review. During reviews, comments or “Issues” may be made on the design, or the reviewer may create and Issue needing further information or documents. Resubmittals are through the Plan Room accessible by logging into the same ACA portal used to apply for permits. The screen above shows the Uploads tab used to resubmit any documents. The Issues tab is used to view plan reviewer issues and a place to you to answer/respond to Issues. If documents are required, you must upload documents under the Uploads tab even after answering issues in the Issues tab. The city is NOT NOTIFIED if you only answer issues and do not upload revised or new documents requested. Once Technical reviews are complete, the Building Permit fees are assessed and invoiced. Upon payment, the approved plans are available under the Approved tab as shown above. The approved plans should be made available for inspectors on site.

Permits Issued for a Deck (small and large).

Once the application is approved, a separate Permit record number is created where inspections are located. Scheduling of inspections are on the Permit record number accessed through the BuildSA online Customer Portal.

Any mechanical, electrical, or plumbing work requires separate permits applied for by state licensed trade contractors with active registrations with the City of San Antonio. Any lighting, power receptacles, sinks with water and drain lines, and or gas lines to equipment require separate trade permits with fees and inspections.

Inspections

1. CoSA conducts **Building Foundation** and **Building Framing** inspections (if work is uncovered and visible) for decks less than 48” above finished grade-OR-customer submits Engineer/Architect letter for framing, attachment, and foundation (if covered) to clear foundation and framing inspections.
2. All decks 48” and greater above finished grade will require the customer to submit an Engineer/Architect letter to clear framing and foundation inspections.
3. CoSA will conduct a **Final Inspection** on residential decks.

Scheduling Inspections / Clearing of Inspections by Letter

Engineers or Architects letters to clear a Foundation or Framing inspection indicated above are submitted on the permit record online on the BuildSA Customer Portal. By opening the permit record, uploading engineer's letters (pdf) are under the Record Info tab and Attachments.

The screenshot shows the BuildSA Customer Portal interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Home, Land Development, Building (selected), Profile, and Fire. Below these are two buttons: Search Applications and Create an Application. The main content area displays a record for 'Record RES-RMB-PMT23-36700009: Residential Accessory and Additions Permit' with a status of 'Active'. A dropdown menu is open under the 'Record Info' tab, listing options: Record Details, Processing Status, Related Records, Attachments (highlighted with a red box and a mouse cursor), Inspections, and Valuation Calculator. Below the menu, there is a red text prompt: 'To upload a new document click Add. The maximum file size allowed is 500 MB'. At the bottom, there is a table with columns: Name, Record ID, Record Type, Entity Type, and a table with the text 'No records found.' A red box highlights a blue 'Add' button.

Scheduling of inspections are also under the Record Info tab, by clicking “Inspections”.

Once a deck permit is complete with all inspections approved and all fees paid, a Letter of Completion will be sent by email to the applicants and any other contacts on the permit record.

If you have any questions on this process, please contact the Plan Review Staff at DSD.PlansManagement@sanantonio.gov.

Summary:

This Information Bulletin is for informational purposes only.

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