

Ten top tips

From the Building Commission

5 March 2008

How to prevent your decks and balconies from collapsing

Inspection statistics reveal that many rotting balconies and decks could cause injury or even death in the event of a collapse.

The following tips will help you maintain decks and balconies and, importantly the safety of those who use them:

1. Look for any compression or deformation of the supporting posts, beams or joists. Decayed timber, will feel soft and spongy.
2. Check underneath decks or balconies and look for deterioration, particularly where timber members join.
3. Make sure the deck or balcony structure is properly fixed to the building.
4. Check the base of timber posts for rot.
5. Check brackets and bolts for signs of rust.
6. Ensure that posts are securely anchored to the foundation in concrete or attached to concrete footings using proprietary metal brackets.
7. Make sure water does not pool at the base of a post or wall support.
8. Check handrails and balustrades to ensure they are not rotted, corroded, loose or unstable.
9. Be aware that certain timbers are more susceptible to external environments, requiring frequent inspections.
10. If you suspect a problem with your balcony or deck, contact a building surveyor, structural engineer or registered builder, architect or building inspector.

For further information or to obtain a brochure on balcony or deck maintenance, visit the Building Commission website www.buildingcommission.com.au

The Building Commission provides these tips as a guide to help consumers find out more information and assist their building process.