

Read the Label

How many deck builders know that sanding dust can spontaneously ignite? And how many read safety instructions?

I took NADRA's courses, in Baltimore, to become a Certified Master Deck Builder the first year they were offered. So I was the only person in Illinois who was certified when a lawyer came looking for a deck expert.

I was hired as an expert witness regarding deck-maintenance safety. Someone had sanded a deck and left the sanding dust in a plastic bag on the deck overnight. The deck was in the backyard, attached to the house. During the night, the sanding dust caught fire and severely damaged an expensive house.

Safe disposal of sanding dust requires placement in a metal container. Water should then be added before a lid is sealed on. Empty stain cans from a previous job are ideal for this task.

Failure to follow these steps caused \$640,000 in damage to this suburban house.

I've known for 30 years that all waste from deck refinishing is potentially hazardous, but I admit that before this trial experience I've often tossed the instructions that come with new tools, assuming that I already know what they say. No more! Now I read instructions because this is the best way to become aware of potential problems.

Being a master deck builder involves more than just building to code. A deck builder needs to know safe practices for each tool in his truck. For the welfare of our employees and customers, we need to know and follow safe practices.

Don Alan
Chicago, Ill.

OK to Remove Grade Stamps?

I have worked on the supply/manufacturing side of the lumber industry since 1965 and feel you have done your readers a great disservice by suggesting that they remove grade stamps by planing their decking prior to installation (see "Removing Grade Stamps," *Q&A*, Feb/Mar 2015). This would reduce the thickness of the decking, and therefore its span rating, and I don't know of any mill or manufacturer that would stand behind its product after this was done. Any building inspector that was aware of this practice should require certified engineering and testing on the new product. In addition, if

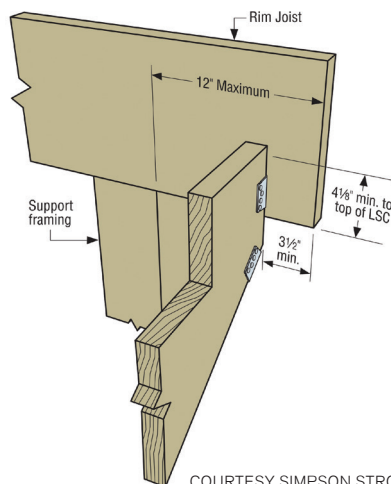
there was ever a claim against the decking, I'm sure a mill representative would deny it in the absence of grade stamps or mill numbers. Even if the recommendation is to remove only $\frac{1}{16}$ inch from the face of the decking, there's no guarantee that readers of the article will do the same. Most $\frac{5}{4}$ decking measures $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches thick, so removing $\frac{1}{16}$ inch will reduce the thickness and strength by 6%. I also think it would be hard to produce the same quality finish that is provided by the mills.

Terry John
Holly, Mich.

Attaching Stair Stringers

In Kim Katwijk's "Stairbuilding Tips You Missed at the Deck Expo" video on the *PDB* website (deckmagazine.com/videos/), there's a key detail missing. When you are installing the Simpson Strong-Tie LSC stair bracket shown in the video, the header blocking (or rim joist) that the stairs attach to must extend at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches past the point where the stringer is mounted, as shown in the illustration at right. ♦

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COURTESY SIMPSON STRONG-TIE