

## Protect Blocking With Flashing

Blocking is important, especially where it's needed for structural support of guard posts [see "Foolproof Guard Posts," July/August 2016]. But where I build, blocking is also often a hidden danger that can become a rot area around the base of posts, where they can be weakened at the point of greatest moment.

A little bit of flashing goes a long way toward preventing this problem. In addition, I modify my blocking depending on how the guardrail posts will be finished off. If they are going to get a sleeve or wrap, for example, I will wrap a peel-and-stick membrane around and extending up about 6 inches above the deck height. This protects the wood, especially all the butt joints where water can creep in and stay long enough to turn everything into food. Intermediate blocking is made of PT lumber that is the next size down and is held to the bottom of the joists.

I try not to butt any joists or blocking lengthwise to another joist, and if I have to create a double or triple joist for some reason, it gets a metal or a peel-and-stick flashing over the top. All wood beams get a piece of metal cap flashing over the top.

When I have a picture-frame detail, I find I can often add a joist just inside the guardrail posts. This acts as blocking and



allows the picture-frame-to-field-decking transition to happen in a gap, where there won't be blocking to hold the moisture (see photo, above). I use small 4x4 offcuts to maintain the spacing between posts. This method requires fascia outside of the framing to keep help support the picture rail, but that's easy enough to do; in fact, I usually install spacers between the fascia and the framing to avoid trapping water there and to give the picture rail a stronger connection.

**Lavrans Mathiesen**  
(from online comments)

## Better Inspector Training Needed

The last three homes I purchased all had decks built with their rim joists nailed instead of bolted to their support posts. One was constructed in 2000, one in 2002, and one in 2006. All three were inspected (by different people). The 2000 and 2006 homes were also inspected by their buyers when I sold them. None of the five inspectors noted any issue with the construction of the decks.

**Dan DeWilde**  
(from online comments)

## Guard-Post Fastener Advice

Matt Breyer's guard-post blocking details [see "Foolproof Guard Posts," July/August 2016] are very similar to my methods, which have worked well for years and which pass muster in all jurisdictions I work in. The only difference is that I use either FastenMaster ThruLoks or 1/2-inch-diameter galvanized carriage bolts and nuts. Lag screws are great for a lot of applications, but not for mounting guard posts, as the threads are too reliant on the integrity of the inside of the post. ❖

**Chad Gailey**  
(from online comments)

**We want your two cents.**

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