

### Required Deck Inspections?

While it's a good idea for decks to be inspected annually, it's an uphill battle to get an owner interested if the deck hasn't actually rotted out or collapsed. I inspect decks for buyers mainly, and every deck I've inspected has a problem on it somewhere.

For example, I recently inspected a newly installed composite deck over a waterproof membrane located above a garage. The owner—who had spent thousands on the materials and did the work himself—was stunned to read my report where I pointed out all the problems that he had built into his deck: a railing that was 42 inches high on one side and 38 inches high on the other; poorly attached guard posts; and composite decking that was fastened to the joists with a single screw per joist (and was cupping as a result). In addition, a steep access ramp leading to the deck was supported by posts that didn't have any footings, and the ramp's composite decking was very slippery at the angle the ramp was built at, even when dry. I

wouldn't even attempt to walk on it when it was wet. And the owner hadn't allowed any method for water to drain off the deck, so that it would be trapped behind the fascia boards until it was finally high enough to flow over the edge of the fascia.

The short answer to getting owners interested in doing inspections? Mandate it through a law. The city of Berkeley, Calif., instituted a mandatory inspection of decks every five years in reaction to the collapse last year that killed six and severely injured seven others. In the meantime, the death and injury toll will continue to rise while municipalities dither. Acceptable losses? Not to insurance companies who pay. So maybe there's the answer: Insurance companies could mandate that homes and apartments with decks have to be inspected annually to keep their insurance policy in force.

**Bill Leys**

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### Diversity in the Trades

So who exactly is stopping people of gender or race from entering the trades? I have been in the construction industry for over 50 years and have never seen anyone kept from a job due to either their race or their gender. I have worked with more races than I can count on my two hands. I have worked with women and gays both in the field and all the way up to upper-level management in major national companies. If there is a problem, it

is not because of us; it is because of an education system that has stripped schools of shop classes and discouraged kids from entering the trades, and because of people who feel that blue-collar jobs are demeaning.

**Tom Armitage**

from online comments at [deckmagazine.com/business/a-lack-of-diversity\\_c](http://deckmagazine.com/business/a-lack-of-diversity_c)

### Editor's Note

Next year, *PDB* will switch from a bi-monthly to a quarterly publication schedule, so readers will receive four instead of six print issues in 2017. There are several reasons for this change, chief among them our continuing migration away from traditional printed content and toward more dynamic (and frequent) online content.

We'll continue to bring you best-practices techniques and details that you can put to work on your own projects, and

keep you up-to-date on the latest tools and products. You'll just need to remember to look for this info more often on your computer, tablet, or smartphone, instead of waiting for it to show up in your mailbox. Or better yet—find out what's new at our website twice a month by signing up at [omeda.com/prd](http://omeda.com/prd) for *Deck Builder Update*, our free email newsletter. ❖

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