

# Bulletin

Balconies, Decks, Entries, Porches and Verandahs,  
Patios, and Roof Decks in RS, RT, and RM Districts

*Effective December 9, 2020*

*Authority: Director of Planning*

## By-law and Policy References

- Zoning and Development By-law No. 3575

## Background and Context

This bulletin provides information on the interpretation and administration of regulations for balconies, decks (and landings), covered entries, porches and verandahs, patios, and roof decks in the RS, RT, and RM districts. This bulletin can also be used for other districts where these elements are proposed.

Definitions and illustrations for each of the features described in this bulletin can be found in section 2 (Definitions) of the Zoning and Development By-law. Regulations are found in section 10 of the Zoning and Development By-law and sections 2, 3, and 4 of each RS, RT, and RM District Schedule and, for some districts, are further described in district-specific guidelines. The intent of the regulations is to enable and encourage outdoor space while managing bulk and massing, and impacts on privacy.

The information contained in this document does not summarize or restate the regulations in the Zoning and Development By-law, but clarifies how regulations are interpreted and applied in specific circumstances to assist with the preparation and review of permit applications.

# 1. Balconies

Regulation(s)	Interpretation
Projections into Required Yards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balconies are generally not permitted to project into required yards, except as provided in Section 10.32 for multiple dwellings.</li> </ul>
Floor Space Ratio (FSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of floor area excluded from FSR for balconies varies by district schedule and is combined with the floor area exclusion for decks and entries, porches, and verandahs.</li> <li>Areas directly below balconies (single or stacked) are excluded from floor area calculations, including where the balcony is over a sunken entry area.</li> <li><b>Figures 1 and 2</b> provide examples of balconies where areas below are excluded from floor area calculations.</li> </ul>
Site Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balconies are not included in the calculation of site coverage.</li> </ul>
Building Depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balconies are not included in the calculation of building depth.</li> </ul>



Figure 1. *Balcony example*



Figure 2. *Example of a balcony on a multiple dwelling*

## 2. Decks and Landings

### 2.1. Decks

Regulation(s)	Interpretation
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Projections into Required Yards

- Decks are generally not permitted to project into any required yards, unless otherwise permitted in a district schedule.
- If a site is using Rear Yard Compatibility (section 4.6.1 of RS-1/RS-6), then any portion of the deck that projects into this area will be limited in height (including railings) to the height limits for accessory buildings per Section 2.2.A for Accessory Buildings.

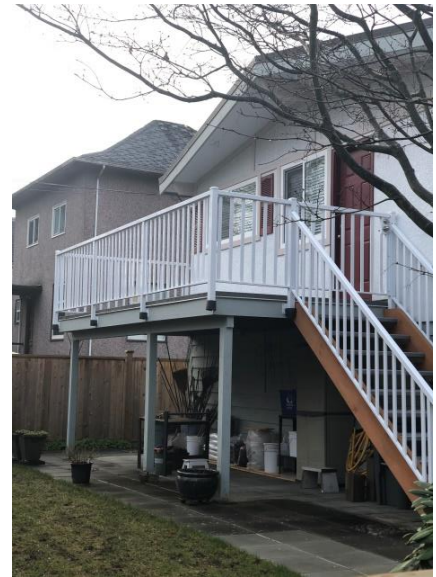


Figure 3. Back deck example

Floor Space Ratio (FSR)

- The amount of floor area excluded for decks varies by district schedule and is combined with the floor area exclusion for balconies, entries, porches, and verandahs.
- Note: roof decks are not included in the floor area exclusion limitations for balconies, decks, porches – see Roof Decks section in this document.
- Any deck area that exceeds the maximum floor area exclusion will be counted as floor area in both the overall FSR limits and the above-grade FSR limits (in zoning districts where an above grade FSR applies).
- Any area of the deck that cantilevers is considered part of the deck and is eligible for the floor area exclusion (subject to yard and building depth compliance). The area below a deck is not counted in floor area if it is open on at least two sides (see **figure 3**), regardless of what the area under the deck is used for (including sunken entries or open carports that are exempt from floor area). Any areas below cantilevered portions are also not counted in floor area.
- Deck areas under cantilevered roofs, allowable roof eaves, or balconies are not counted in floor area.

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Site Coverage and Impermeable Materials

- Decks excluded from floor area calculations are not counted in the calculation of site coverage (e.g. section 4.8.2 of RS-1) but are counted in the calculation of impermeable materials (e.g. section 4.8.6 of RS-1).



Figure 4. *Raised patio example*

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Building Depth

- Decks are counted in building depth calculations.

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Raised Patios

- Patios that are located more than 600 mm (2.0 ft.) above grade (and therefore require a guard under the Vancouver Building By-law) meet the definition of “decks” and will not be considered “patios” for regulatory purposes.
- **Figures 4 and 5** provide examples of raised patios (deck by definition).

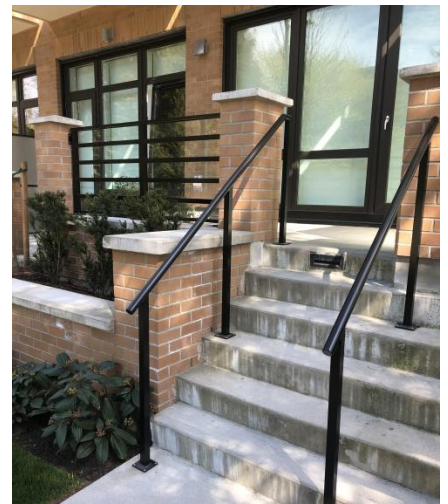


Figure 5. *Raised patio example*

## 2.2. Landings

Regulation(s)	Interpretation
Applicability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landings provide a horizontal platform directly outside of a building entrance, with access to grade. Landings are limited to a maximum size of 3.34 m<sup>2</sup> (36.0 sq. ft.). If there is more than one landing, they must not exceed a combined maximum size of 3.34 m<sup>2</sup> (36.0 sq. ft.).</li> <li>For landings to be permitted to project into yards, they must be uncovered (except for approved eaves and canopies (See <b>figures 6 and 7</b> on the following page).</li> </ul>
Projections into Required Yards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landings may project up to 1.8 m (6.0 ft.) into a required front, rear, or exterior side yard but may not project into an interior side yard.</li> <li>Stairs and landings that provide direct access to grade in the front yard, beyond the allowable projection for entries, porches and verandahs will continue to be permitted.</li> </ul>
Floor Space Ratio (FSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A landing meeting the other provisions in this section will not be counted in floor area.</li> </ul>
Building Depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landings, where they comply with all other criteria noted in this section, are not included in the calculation of building depth.</li> </ul>



Figure 6. Landing in front yard



Figure 7. Landing in rear yard



### 3. Entries, Porches, and Verandahs

Regulation(s)	Interpretation
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Projections into Required Yards

- Entries, porches and verandahs complying with the conditions listed in section 4.7 of the relevant district schedule are generally permitted to project up to 1.8 m (6.0 ft.) into a required front yard. Section 10.32 allows an additional 540 mm (21 inches) eave projection (see **figure 8**). Note: some district schedules allow up to 1.0 m (3.2 ft.) eave projections.
- The allowable projection is measured to the outside face of the posts of an entry, porch, or verandah.
- In the RS zoning districts entries, porches and verandahs projecting into the front yard are limited to a maximum of 30% of the width of the building (see **figure 9** as an example).
- The 1.8 m (6.0 ft.) entry, porch, and verandah projection applies to the entry, porch or verandah structure only. Note: RS-6 specifically prohibits decks directly above the porch projection.
- Stairs and landings that provide direct access to grade in the front yard, beyond the allowable projection for entries, porches, and verandahs will continue to be permitted.
- Entries, porches, and verandahs in the rear yard must be located within the allowable building depth.



Figure 8. Example of flat ceiling porch with maximum measurements



Figure 9. Covered porch example

Height

- Where the maximum height of a front entry, porch, or verandah is regulated, the ceiling height, excluding roof structure, is limited to 3.1 m (10.0 ft.) measured from the porch floor (see **figure 8**).
- For vaulted ceilings the limit is applied to the highest point of the ceiling.

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Floor Space Ratio (FSR)

- The amount of floor area excluded for entries, porches, and verandahs varies by district schedule and is combined with the floor area exclusion for balconies and decks.
- The area under a covered entry, porch, or verandah can be excluded from floor area provided that:
  - it is less than 2.0 m (6.5 ft.) in height,
  - the area is not heated, and
  - there is no access to this space from the interior of the building.
- Unless otherwise permitted in a district schedule, entries, porches or verandahs projecting beyond the allowable limits or exceeding the allowable exclusion limits will be counted in floor area. In zones where an above grade FSR applies the floor area will also be counted in the above-grade FSR.

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Site Coverage and Impermeable Materials

- Entries, porches or verandahs are included in the calculation of site coverage and are subject to the limitations on impermeable materials, where they apply (check applicable district schedules).

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Building Depth

- Entries, porches, and verandahs are not counted in the calculation of building depth, unless they extend beyond the permitted projection limits.
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## 4. Patios<sup>1</sup>

Regulation(s)	Interpretation
Floor Space Ratio (FSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patios may be generally located anywhere on the site except within the required side yard. Patios are not limited in size or counted in floor area calculations, provided they are not covered in any way or enclosed (see <b>figure 10</b>).</li> </ul>
Site Coverage and Impermeable Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patios are not included in the calculation of site coverage but are included in the calculation of impermeable materials.</li> </ul>
Building Depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patios are not included in the calculation of building depth.</li> </ul>

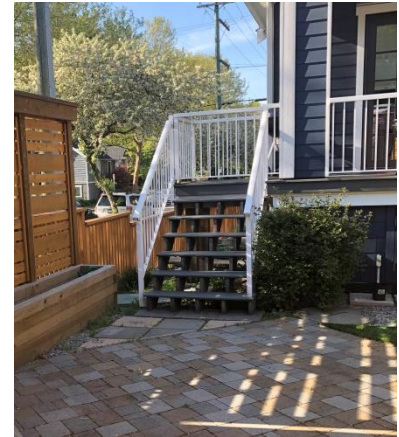


Figure 10. *Patio example*

<sup>1</sup> Raised patios are discussed in Section 2.1 of this document.

## 5. Roof Decks

Regulation(s)	Interpretation
Determination of Roof Deck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the definition of Roof Deck (see Section 2 of the by-law) a roof deck is described as a platform that is located in such a way as to form a roof over an existing or proposed floor below.</li> <li>Determination as to whether a building element meets the definition of Roof Deck is not dependent on whether the area below is excluded or included in the floor area calculations.</li> </ul>
Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guard rails around roof decks are counted in the maximum building height calculations (See <b>figures 11</b> and <b>12</b>).</li> </ul>
Floor Space Ratio (FSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roof decks are generally not limited in size and, provided the Director of Planning first considers the effect on privacy and overlook, these areas are excluded from FSR if they are uncovered and unenclosed.</li> <li>Note: roof decks are not included in the floor area exclusion limits for balconies, decks, porches.</li> <li>Where roof decks are accessed via exterior stairs those stairs will be counted in the floor area calculations.</li> <li>Other features located on roof decks will be counted in floor area calculations (e.g. roof access structures and pergolas).</li> </ul>
Building Depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roof decks can be located anywhere within the permitted building depth of the principal building provided that on conditional applications the Director of Planning considers the impact on privacy and overlook.</li> </ul>
Accessory Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roof decks are typically not permitted on an accessory building (to protect privacy and limit overlook), unless it is also located within the building depth of the principal building (see district schedule for specific regulations).</li> </ul>

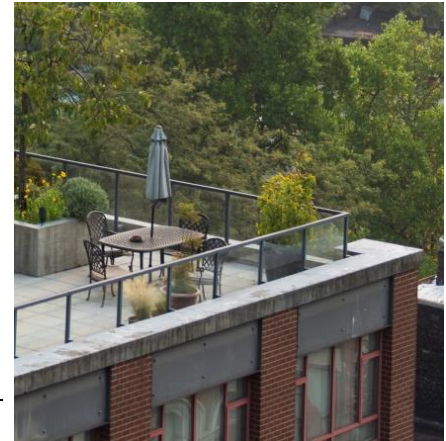


Figure 11. *Roof deck example*



Figure 12. *Roof deck guard rails example*