COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
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Deaf and Hard of Hearing callers should contact the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 V/TTY or call 711

PORCHES

If you have questions, please contact a Customer Service Representative at 763-531-1000

The information in this pamphlet is not meant to cover all guidelines and requirements of city code. You should contact the city about required permits and specifications before beginning any project.

ANY PORCH ATTACHED TO A BUILDING REQUIRES A BUILDING PERMIT, NO MATTER HOW SMALL THE PORCH.

ANY FREESTANDING PORCH REQUIRES A BUILDING PERMIT, UNLESS IT IS NO MORE THAN 120 SQUARE FEET IN AREA.

NO PORCH MAY BE LOCATED ON AN EASEMENT, INCLUDING DRAINAGE AND UTILITY EASEMENTS OFTEN FOUND ALONG REAR OR SIDE LOT LINES.

ZONING ORDINANCE SETBACKS APPLICABLE TO PORCHES:

- Porches attached to the house must comply with the required minimum setbacks for the principal structure, as follows:
  - Front setback is typically 30 feet from the front lot line
  - Rear setback is typically 30 feet from the rear lot line
  - Side setback is typically 5 feet from the side lot line
  - Side Street setback is typically 10 feet from the side street lot line, unless the side street is a collector or minor arterial street, in which case the setback is 15 feet. (Please note that the Side Street setback is typically only applicable to corner lots. In such cases, the lot line with the shorter street frontage is considered the front lot line, and the lot line with the longer street frontage is considered the side street lot line. This rule applies no matter which way the house faces and no matter how it is addressed.)

However, the Zoning Ordinance allows attached porches enclosed with screens, windows or walls to be located up to 4 feet into the front or rear setback, subject to certain limitations. Please see the handout, *Certain Building Projections Allowed into Required Setbacks*, for more information about this limited exception to the standard 30 foot front and rear setback requirement.

The Zoning Ordinance also allows attached unenclosed porches (those without screens, windows or walls) to be located up to 8 feet into the front or rear setback, provided their cumulative encroachment into the 30 foot front setback does not exceed 200 square feet.

- Freestanding porches, whether or not they are enclosed with screens, windows or walls, are typically permitted within 3 feet of the rear or side lot lines when located in the rear yard. Such porches cannot be located any closer to an abutting street than the principal structure.

REQUIRED INFORMATION WHEN APPLYING FOR A PERMIT:

- City of Crystal building permit application

- Two copies of a Certificate of Survey or two copies of a site plan drawn to scale, indicating:
  - ✓ lot dimensions
  - ✓ location and dimensions of existing structure(s), including all buildings, sheds,
  - ✓ garages, decks, patios, sidewalks, porches, driveways and swimming pools
  - ✓ location and dimensions of the proposed structure(s)
  - ✓ setback measurements from property lines (see site plan drawing)

- Two copies of plans, drawn to scale with all dimensions, showing the design of proposed structure(s) and type of materials being used for construction of the structure(s). The plans should also indicate:

Floor Plan:
- proposed porch size
- size and spacing of floor joists
- size, location and spacing of posts
- window and door openings
- header sizes
- size, spacing and direction of rafter material

Cross Section:
- diameter and depth of footings
- size and spacing of floor joists
- size of posts
- header size supporting floor joists
- header size over windows and screened openings
- types of sheathing, siding, lumber, flooring and roofing material
- guardrail and ceiling height
- size and spacing of rafter material
- pitch of roof

Elevations:
- front and side view, indicating height of structure

BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS:

Footings

* All footings are required to be a minimum of 42" below grade with a flared base.

* Individual concrete or masonry piers shall project at least 8" above exposed ground unless the columns or posts which they support are of redwood, cedar or approved treated material.

Joists and Framing

* Wood joists 18" or closer to grade or wood beams 12" or closer to grade, and their supports, shall be redwood, cedar or approved treated material.

* Floor joist spacing at 24" on center requires 2 x decking and floor joist spacing at 16" on center permits 1 x decking.

* Any wood members that are exposed to weather without adequate protection from a roof, eave or overhang must be of approved treated material.
  NOTE: ACQ treated wood requires special fasteners and connections.

Stairways

* If stairway is to be provided, the minimum clear width is 36". The maximum tread rise is 8", minimum tread rise 4" and minimum tread run 9".

* The dimensions of any one tread run or riser may not vary from the dimensions of any other tread run and rise by more than ⅜".

Guardrails and Handrails

* All decks, landings, ramps, balconies and porches which are more than 30" above grade or above a lower structure must be protected by a guardrail at least 36" in height. Open guardrails and stair railings must have intermediate rails or an ornamental pattern that a 4" sphere cannot pass through.

* A handrail shall be provided at all stairways having 4 or more risers.

* Handrails shall be placed not less than 34" or more than 38" above the nosing of the treads. They shall be continuous the full length of stairs from a point directly above the top riser of a flight to a point directly above the lowest riser of the flight.

* Handrail ends must be returned or terminated in posts.

* Handrails shall have a grippable cross section of not less than 1¼" or more than 2 ⅝" in cross-sectional dimension or the shape shall provide an equivalent gripping surface.

* The handgrip must have a smooth surface with no sharp corners; edges shall have a minimum radius of ⅛ ".

* Handrails adjacent to a wall shall have a space not less than 1½" between the wall and the handrail.