

# Harpeth Decks Adds Code Edition Verification to Deck Design Process

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Harpeth Decks has added a jurisdiction verification step to the beginning of its deck design process, following the City of Franklin's adoption of the 2024 International Residential Code effective January 1, 2026. The Franklin-based deck builder now confirms which code edition governs a property before design work begins, rather than at permit submission.

The change responds to a divergence in adopted codes across Middle Tennessee. Franklin now enforces the 2024 IRC within city limits, along with the 2023 National Electrical Code. Unincorporated Williamson County permits under the 2021 IRC, adopted effective September 30, 2024. Tennessee's state residential program, which applies in areas where local building codes are not enforced by the local government, has adopted the 2018 edition. Wilson County also lists the 2021 IRC among its enforced standards.

Permitting authority follows the parcel rather than the mailing address. Two properties carrying Franklin addresses can fall under different code editions if one sits inside city limits and the other in the unincorporated county. Each edition carries its own provisions governing residential deck construction, and a design decision made against the wrong edition tends to surface at plan review or inspection rather than at the drawing stage.

"The address on the mailbox does not tell you who issues the permit," said Daniel Jones, Owner of Harpeth Decks. "We confirm the jurisdiction and the edition first, because a change on paper costs a conversation and a change in the field costs a rebuild."

The distinction matters beyond new construction. On structural repair work, the governing edition can influence whether existing elements are treated as ordinary repair or as an alteration requiring review, which changes the permitting path for the project. The company's deck safety inspections are likewise assessed against the standards in effect at the specific property rather than against a single regional benchmark

applied everywhere.

The two primary jurisdictions in the company's service area differ procedurally as well as technically. Franklin processes permits and plan review through its Geocivix portal, administered by the Building and Neighborhood Services department. Williamson County operates a separate electronic plan review system through its Building Codes Department. Applicants who assume one process transfers to the other generally discover the difference after submission.

Electrical work adds a further division. Electrical permits for projects in the unincorporated county are issued by the State of Tennessee rather than by Williamson County. Hardwired deck lighting therefore follows a separate permitting track from the structural deck permit in some jurisdictions and a different arrangement in others, and that track involves a licensed electrical contractor rather than the deck builder.

Franklin adds a review layer that applies only within portions of the city. Properties inside the Historic Preservation Overlay require approval from a Historic Preservation Planner before a construction permit can be issued. Homeowners who begin at the permit counter rather than with the overlay question can lose weeks that were avoidable.

Inspection sequencing is consistent in structure across the region, moving from footing to framing to final, but the specific requirements being inspected trace back to the adopted edition. That places the code edition question upstream of nearly every other decision on a deck project, including footing layout, framing approach and railing design.

Harpeth Decks builds custom wood and composite decks, screened and covered porches, pergolas, patios and pool decks, and provides deck repair, restoration and safety inspections. The company installs decking from Trex, TimberTech, Deckorators and Fiberon, and works across Franklin and Williamson County.

Jones founded the company in June 2019 after working in general construction, having identified a need in his hometown for a deck builder focused on the work as a specialty rather than as one service among many. The verification step formalizes an approach the company had been applying informally as the regional code picture grew more fragmented.

The fragmentation is likely to persist. Jurisdictions adopt new code editions on independent schedules, and the gap between Franklin's 2024 edition and the surrounding county's 2021 edition will remain until the county completes its own adoption cycle. Homeowners comparing bids across jurisdictional lines may encounter proposals built against different standards without either builder stating which edition was assumed.

Harpeth Decks recommends that homeowners planning a deck confirm two things before design begins: which authority will issue the permit for their specific parcel, and which code edition that authority currently enforces. Both are published by the jurisdictions themselves. The City of Franklin publishes its adopted codes through Building and Neighborhood Services, and Williamson County publishes its adopted codes through the Building Codes Department.

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### **Harpeth Decks**

*Harpeth Decks builds custom wood and composite decks, porches, pergolas, and pool decks in Franklin, TN. We work with Trex, TimberTech, Deckorators, Fibron, and IPE. Repairs, refinishing, and free safety inspections also available. Veteran discounts.*

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