

Deck It Cites NADRA Estimate on Decks Past Their Service Life

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Deck It, a Massachusetts deck builder and member of the North American Deck and Railing Association, has outlined the structural checkpoints that determine whether an aging deck can be resurfaced or needs to be rebuilt, citing association estimates that a substantial share of decks in North America are past the point where that question is straightforward.

NADRA estimates that roughly 30 million decks across North America have outlived their practical service life. The association notes that many of those structures were built before current building codes took effect, and it publishes a consumer checklist, Check Your Deck, covering areas homeowners can examine from accessible parts of the structure.

The issue is particularly relevant across older housing markets in the Northeast, where a significant portion of the residential stock predates the current generation of deck construction practice. A deck built alongside a house in the early 2000s is now more than twenty years into service, and the components carrying it have been through every freeze and thaw cycle since.

Deck It said the practical question homeowners face is rarely whether a deck looks worn. It is whether the structure beneath the surface can carry a new one.

"The boards are the part people judge it by, and the boards are the part that tells you the least," said Patrick Byrne, co-founder of Deck It. "A deck can look tired and be structurally fine, or look perfectly presentable and have real problems in the frame. Those are two different projects with two different budgets."

The first checkpoint is the connection between the deck and the house. The ledger board transfers a substantial portion of the deck's load into the building, and the condition of that connection, along with the flashing that keeps water out of it, is generally assessed before anything else. NADRA's checklist directs

homeowners to look for water staining and debris collecting at the deck-to-house joint as an indication that flashing has failed.

Framing is the second. Joists and beams carry the walking surface, and decay tends to begin where water sits longest, including at joist ends and anywhere two pieces of lumber meet. The association's checklist describes probing wood near the ledger and in suspected wet areas, noting that wood which gives easily under a point, or feels spongy, indicates decay.

Fasteners and hardware make up the third. Connectors and structural screws hold the assembly together at the points under the most stress, and corrosion at those connections progresses out of sight beneath the deck surface. Rusted hardware also accelerates decay in the surrounding wood, which compounds the original problem over time.

Posts and footings are the fourth, and the least forgiving. Footings are buried, which makes them difficult to evaluate and difficult to correct once a structure sits on top of them. Their condition frequently determines whether a rebuild can reuse any part of the existing structure or whether the work starts at ground level.

"Once we know what the frame and the footings are doing, the conversation gets much simpler," said Jake Zbikowski, co-founder of Deck It. "Either the structure supports what the homeowner wants to do, or it does not, and it is better to find that out before anyone orders material."

Railings represent a separate consideration, since a railing is only as sound as what it is attached to. Deck It said a project focused on updating visible features still depends on the condition of the structure carrying them, which is why railing replacement on an older deck is assessed alongside the framing rather than in isolation.

Stairs follow similar logic. Stringers, treads and the connection between the stairs and the deck itself are subject to the same moisture exposure as the main structure, and in many cases sit closer to grade, where contact with wet ground and vegetation accelerates deterioration.

The company noted that NADRA's checklist is a homeowner starting point rather than a substitute for a professional evaluation, and that portions of a deck structure are not accessible without getting underneath it.

Deck It said the assessment matters most when a homeowner is deciding between resurfacing an existing frame and replacing the structure entirely. Installing new decking over framing that is near the end of its life produces a deck that looks new and performs like the structure underneath it.

Founded in 2017 and focused exclusively on decking since 2021, Deck It designs and builds custom decks,

porches and sunrooms for residential and commercial properties across Central Massachusetts and the MetroWest region, operating from a showroom in Bolton. Services include new deck construction, deck replacement, framing, railing systems, deck lighting and under-deck drainage. The company is a TimberTech Platinum Pro and Trex Pro Platinum contractor. In 2025 it was named Top Contractor of the Northeast by TimberTech, an award recognizing the volume of TimberTech products installed.

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Deck It

Deck It is a Bolton, MA based, family-owned custom deck builder serving Central Massachusetts. Founded in 2017 by Jake and Pat, our team has focused exclusively on decking since 2021

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