

Mueller Remodeling Reveals How Composite and PVC Decking Differ for Winter Installation

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CINCINNATI, OH - November 06, 2026 -
Mueller Remodeling is outlining how composite and PVC decking differ for cold-weather installation as winter approaches in Southwest Ohio. For homeowners planning decks on sloped yards, site conditions help shape the design. Late-season installation adds another consideration: the temperature when boards are installed. Fiberon, a brand Mueller Remodeling lists on its company profile, publishes a separate installation guide for each material.

Both materials expand and contract with the weather, so manufacturers specify end-to-end board gaps based on the installation temperature. In Fiberon?s guide for polyethylene (PE) composite decking, the gap is one-quarter inch at 35 degrees Fahrenheit and below. It narrows in steps as temperatures rise and reaches zero at 110 degrees and above.

Fiberon?s PVC guide uses a shorter chart with different values. It calls for a one-eighth-inch end gap at 35 degrees and below, one-sixteenth inch from 36 to 89 degrees, and no gap at 90 degrees and above. Full

warranty coverage depends on meeting the manufacturer?s spacing requirements.

The two charts show that composite and PVC boards follow different rules, even from the same manufacturer. Gap requirements also vary by manufacturer and product line, so installers should follow the guide's current spacing tables for the specific board.

Cold air affects more than spacing. Both Fiberon guides specify pre-drilling at board ends and at temperatures below 40 degrees Fahrenheit when installing hidden face fasteners. Pre-drilling helps prevent splitting around screw holes. Side-to-side spacing stays at a minimum of three-sixteenths of an inch in every season, with at least one quarter inch between boards and any permanent structure.

For late-season deck planning, NOAA?s winter outlook, released October 15, 2026, favors warmer-than-average temperatures for the Midwest and much of the East from December through February. For the Ohio Valley, the outlook does not favor either a wetter or a drier winter. The agency notes that it does not project snowfall totals, since snow is generally not predictable more than a week ahead.

Whatever the seasonal forecast, storage and handling also affect board temperature before installation. The guides call for storing boards on a flat surface with support every 24 inches and keeping them shaded or covered once packaging is removed. Direct sunlight can heat boards above the surrounding air temperature, so the manufacturer advises keeping them shaded before cutting and securing them.

Fiberon recommends added blocking where temperature swings are extreme. Its guides recommend extra framing support made from nominal two-inch lumber where board ends meet. When hidden fasteners are used, the guides also call for two screws driven through each board?s face into the joist nearest its midpoint.

This helps the boards expand and contract evenly at both ends. The guides also recommend arranging the framing supports in a ladder pattern to allow drainage, rather than laying solid blocking flat.

The guides also differ on installations where boards may remain underwater. The PVC guide permits submerged dock and pool applications, but its warranty excludes boards submerged in water that repeatedly freezes and thaws. The PE composite guide prohibits prolonged partial or complete submersion.

Mueller Remodeling?s materials note that Ohio freeze-thaw cycles can stress boards and fasteners and that drainage beneath a deck helps boards perform consistently. Fiberon?s guides require unobstructed airflow beneath at least half of the deck?s perimeter.

They also require at least 1.5 inches of clearance above the ground or existing surface, measured from the bottom of the joists or fascia, whichever hangs lower. Water must also drain away from beneath the structure.

Mueller Remodeling is a family-owned and locally operated company serving Loveland, East Cincinnati, and nearby areas of Ohio. The company builds decks and installs composite and PVC decking, as well as wood options. Its services also include porch construction, patio construction, kitchen remodeling, bathroom remodeling, and basement finishing.

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Mueller Remodeling

Mueller Remodeling, a family-owned and locally operated business in Loveland, OH, blends expert craftsmanship with a personal touch, offering comprehensive remodeling services.

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