



CHS Custom Decks & Design Outlines Cold-Climate Deck Build Standards

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CHS Custom Decks & Design, a family-owned and veteran-owned deck building company in Apple Valley, Minnesota, has outlined the cold-climate construction standards it applies to every project as the 2026 deck building season opens across the Twin Cities. The company, owned by Chuck and Heather Saleen, builds custom decks and outdoor living spaces engineered for the region's freeze-thaw cycles.

The standards center on how Minnesota winters affect a deck's foundation, framing, and surface. Frost depths in the Twin Cities regularly reach 42 inches or more, and the repeated freezing and thawing that runs from late fall into spring places stress on footings and structural connections. The company sets footings to local frost depth and details framing to account for the seasonal movement and moisture that shorten the life of decks not built for the climate.

The approach reflects a broader point about building in the region. A deck that is not engineered for frost movement can heave, loosen at its connections, or separate from the home over successive winters,

problems that often surface years after construction. By accounting for these conditions during design rather than after, the company aims to reduce the structural issues that cold-climate decks commonly develop over time.

"A deck in Minnesota lives through conditions most regions never see, so the engineering has to start below the surface," said Chuck Saleen, co-owner of CHS Custom Decks & Design. "The design and the footings come first, before any conversation about the boards on top."

The company's process begins with an on-site consultation and a three-dimensional design model that lets homeowners review layout, materials, and how the deck will connect to the home before construction. Permitting and code compliance follow, and the company manages each phase through the final walkthrough. That sequence is intended to settle design and structural decisions early, when changes are easiest to make, rather than during the build.

Material and framing choices reflect the same focus. CHS Custom Decks & Design builds in composite, PVC, and wood, including cedar, redwood, and exotic hardwoods such as Ipe, with framing in pressure-treated lumber, aluminum, or engineered lumber selected to resist moisture and structural shifting. The company works with manufacturers including Trex, TimberTech, Deckorators, Viewrail, Barrette Outdoor Living, and Westbury, and builds decks in platform, raised, multi-level, freestanding, rooftop, pool, curved, cantilevered, covered, and screened configurations. Railing options include composite, aluminum, glass, cable, vinyl, and wood, along with deck lighting integrated into steps, railings, and surrounding landscape.

Beyond the deck itself, the company builds porches, patios, and pergolas, including louvered systems, as extensions of a central deck design. Porch work includes covered and screened options built with screen systems suited to Minnesota's seasons, while patios are built in concrete, paver, brick, and natural stone. The company also handles deck inspections, resurfacing, additions, and remodeling for existing structures, work that extends the life of decks already in place.

According to the company, it has completed more than 400 projects and draws on more than 30 years of combined construction experience among its ownership. It holds an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau and backs its work with a two-year craftsmanship warranty, with manufacturer material warranties that vary by product.

"Most homeowners come to us focused on how the deck will look, and the work is making sure it also holds up for years in this climate," said Heather Saleen, co-owner of CHS Custom Decks & Design. "Starting with the design and the footings is what makes that possible."

The company reports that demand for outdoor living space has continued across the Twin Cities, with

homeowners increasingly treating decks, porches, and patios as connected parts of a single backyard plan rather than separate projects. CHS Custom Decks & Design designs these spaces around a central deck to keep the layout cohesive.

CHS Custom Decks & Design serves Apple Valley and the surrounding south metro, including Rosemount, Lakeville, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, and Inver Grove Heights

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CHS Custom Decks & Design

CHS Custom Decks & Design is a family-owned, veteran-owned deck builder based in Apple Valley, MN, founded by Chuck and Heather Saleen

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