

7 Common Inspection Points Before You Build Your Redwood Deck

Before a single board is cut, there are inspection points that can save you from costly mistakes, failed permits, or even dangerous structural issues. Think of this guide as your pre-build safety net—a quick way to make sure your project is up to code, safe, and ready for long-term success.

1. Foundation & Soil Conditions

Check the stability of your soil—avoid soft or shifting ground.

Confirm proper drainage so water doesn't collect under your deck.

Consider gravel or concrete footing pads for extra stability.

2. Local Building Codes & Permits

Verify you have the required permits before starting.

Review local rules on deck height, railing requirements, and setbacks.

Skipping this step could lead to fines or forced removal.

3. House Attachment & Ledger Board Area

Inspect the area where your deck will attach to the house.

Ensure siding or brick is properly flashed and won't trap water.

A weak ledger board is the #1 cause of deck collapses.

4. Structural Support Layout

Map out post locations—spacing matters for stability.

Check beam sizing against span charts.

Over-spanned joists = unsafe deck + sagging boards.

5. Redwood Material Quality

Inspect all lumber for cracks, warping, or rot before use.

Prioritize heartwood for longevity.

Store wood flat and covered before construction.

6. Safety & Clearance Checks

Look up: overhead power lines or trees in the way?

Look down: underground utilities that could interfere with posts?

Ensure at least 36" clearance under elevated decks for ventilation.

7. Moisture Protection & Ventilation

Confirm airflow to prevent trapped moisture.

Plan for flashing around the ledger and stair stringers.

Consider sealing end-grain cuts for extra durability.

Final Thoughts

Catching these 7 inspection points early could save you thousands of dollars and months of frustration. Use this bonus guide as a quick reference before you start building—it's your insurance policy for a safe, code-compliant deck.

Pair this checklist with your copy of The Ultimate Redwood Deck for the complete system—from pre-build prep all the way to finishing and sealing.

Together, you'll have the confidence and knowledge to build a redwood deck that looks amazing and lasts for decades.