

Decks

The 8th edition of the Massachusetts State Building Code provides a prescriptive table for ledger board attachment of decks. Here is a summary of some of the requirements:

- If positive connection to the primary building structure cannot be verified during inspection, decks shall be self supporting.
- The deck ledger must be a 2x8 minimum
- Ledger board fasteners must be hot-dipped galvanized or stainless steel.
- Lag screws or bolts must be staggered and located 2" from top or bottom and between 2-5" from ends of ledger.
- The tip of the lag screw must extend beyond the inside face of the band joist.
- Fasteners must be spaced per Table R502.2.2.1 (Note: For a 12' deck, maximum spacing of lag screw is 15" o.c, Carriage bolt spacing is 29" o.c.)
- Girders are not permitted to be supported by ledger.
- Alternate deck ledger connections like ledger lock are permitted if installed per manufacturer's instruction. For example, see <http://www.fastenmaster.com/deck-ledger-technical-bulletin.html> (Note: this fastener must have a maximum spacing of 5" o.c. for a 12' deck)
- Cantilevered decks must be provided with hold-downs at ledger of house to resist uplift.
- Consideration for lateral forces (forces that could pull the deck from the house) make require hold-down tension devices.