



## Deck Leisure and Common Sense (Part One)

With decks, we have been trained to build them and then throw them away every 15 years or so. You have all seen this classic bait and switch. You're shown a beautiful wood or composite deck and in two years you have a maintenance nightmare. Building them the same way and expecting different results has been called a form of insanity. We say to ourselves we didn't do enough maintenance or we used the wrong products, falling victim to a drippy deck guilt complex. The fact is you can't maintain the underside of the deck, so it will always fail. Yes, even if you use plastic decking and treated lumber.

Now, one might ask, don't decks need to be built with treated lumber? No, but it is required when wood is in contact or close proximity to the ground. Treated lumber is commonly a softer, weaker lumber—softer to allow the absorption of the chemicals. Some of the newer, safer treatments dissolve the nails, screws, and joist hangers that hold the deck together. You've all seen wood trusses traveling, on trucks, down the roads, but have you ever seen a treated wood truss? It's just

not common. Look in your attic, your own roof trusses aren't treated, neither is the plywood, and the nails aren't 20-year coated, yet these untreated wood trusses when installed will work perfectly for decades if not centuries, along with the plywood and nails. The truth is, treated wood costs more and does little if anything for a waterproof deck. Treated decks get rebuilt too.

Is there a way to stop the nails or screws from backing out of the deck? Yes, but it is not with your standard deck construction methods. You can minimize your fasteners' back out or nail pops through lumber stabilization. One way to keep lumber stable is to stop water from soaking into the wood through surface treatments. The less moisture, the less lumber expands, contracts, and twists. This is evident in your house walls, where the drywall is installed with nails or screws and rarely do the fasteners appear. Furthermore, wrapping the tops of the deck joist in conjunction with hidden fasteners provides additional moisture intrusion protection. Add sway bracing or strapping to the top or bottom of the deck joist to minimize

shear forces to the fasteners. Remember, when lumber moves less, the fasteners migrate less. Also, in cases of closed in soffit systems, keep the deck well ventilated to slow condensation and allow the wood to breathe. Waterproof deck-style construction utilizes plywood fastened on the top of the joist to provide sway protection while the waterproof systems hinders the moisture to the structure and eliminates the nail popping common with plank-style decking. Additional venting may still need to be added depending on the style of construction.

When it comes to decks, how does one build it once the right way?

- Only use treated ground contact lumber where required by building code.
- Use Douglas fir framing lumber when possible.
- Slope the top surface 1/4 inch per foot to allow water run-off.
- Use 3/4 inch or greater CCX or ACX Cross Banded end blocked or tongue and groove plywood.
- Acclimate all lumber and plywood before installing.





Deck frame decay



Top of deck

- Glue and screw the deck plywood.
- Provide plenty of ventilation to the joist and underlying lumber.
- Keep the supporting structure as well as all the fasteners and hangers from getting wet.
- Use a proven waterproof product from a manufacturer with workmanship warranties.
- Verify factory-authorized installation company that can provide a factory workmanship warranty.
- Verify manufacturer provides ongoing educating and training for technicians.
- Complete a moisture survey (non-penetrat-

ing) of the perimeter and deck field every two years.

- Maintain siding, window, door, and post caulking or sealant.
- Recover or replace membrane surface at serviceable life end.

Duradek Ltd. deck systems have been protecting sun decks, roof decks, walkways, and porches, including their structures, for 30 years. Duradek Northwest has the oldest, largest, and most experienced local waterproof vinyl deck authorized installer network available. Only Duradek has provided and still pro-

vides accredited education to designers and has been training their installation network for decades and that's why their system works. A well-trained installer often can make an inferior product work, but an untrained worker can cause the best products to fail. Deck failures can mean much more than just replacing your deck, they are connected to your home or building and rot does not know the difference or have boundaries. For complete information on successful deck construction, you can call Duradek Northwest at 800-442-9215 or visit their website at [www.duradeknorthwest.com](http://www.duradeknorthwest.com) ♦

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