

May is Deck Safety Month

Don't let this happen to you!



As spring approaches, thoughts turn to sprucing up the yard, the garden, and spending more time outdoors. Part of gearing up for this time of year is making sure your deck is safe and well-maintained.

A deck can be the perfect place to spend time enjoying the weather with friends and family. A well-built and maintained deck offers a safe haven for outdoor living. However, an improperly built or deteriorated structure can mean disaster. A deck collapse can cause unnecessary, and often serious injuries, and even death. In an effort to save lives and prevent injuries, the North American Deck and Railing Association, Inc. (NADRA) declared May as Deck Safety Month. Deck Safety Month program helps increase public awareness of the necessity for regular inspection and maintenance of existing decks, and proper installation of new decks.

The number of deck failures and resulting injuries has been increasing at an alarming rate. Between 2000 and 2006, there have been at least 30 deaths reported as a direct result of deck collapses and more than 75 percent of people on a deck when it collapses are injured or killed, illuminating just how important it is for homeowners to check their deck. There are 40 million decks in the U.S. that are over 20 years old. At a conservative 1 percent, that means 40,000 decks are currently in need of repair or replacement. Taking that estimate to 10 percent brings the total number of unsafe decks to 4 million.

Mike Beaudry, executive vice president for NADRA states, “Our number one priority to the public is to ensure that the decks they and their families enjoy are safe. NADRA takes this responsibility seriously and has created campaigns and educational programs for the builders, lumberyards, and manufacturers to improve proper installation practices along with checklists and safety awareness information for consumers to follow.”

Reasons for a deck collapsing can range from age of the deck, poor maintenance and exceeding load capacity to improper building methods. Deck failures can be avoided. It's a matter of making the consumer aware of the necessity of choosing a professional deck contractor, regular maintenance and inspection, and knowing the limits of the deck structure.