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2026 NoVA Deck Permit Checklist

Loudoun · Fairfax · Prince William · Arlington counties

This checklist walks you through every step required to legally build a deck in Northern Virginia in 2026 — from HOA architectural review through the final county inspection. Every box you can't check is a potential delay. Bring this with you to your design consultation and we'll help you close the gaps before contract.

Stage 1 — Pre-design (before signing anything)

- Confirmed HOA jurisdiction and pulled their architectural review packet (Brambleton, Broadlands, Ashburn Village, Belmont, One Loudoun, Stone Ridge, Lansdowne, Sully Station, Virginia Run, etc.)
- Located property survey or plat map (county GIS portal usually has it)
- Identified rear setback distance (typically 25 ft Loudoun, 20–25 ft Fairfax — verify your zoning)
- Identified easements (utility, drainage, conservation) — never build over them
- Confirmed septic field location (if applicable) — decks over leach fields are usually prohibited
- Photographed existing yard, drainage patterns, attachment area on the house
- Decided rough deck size, elevation, and material tier (PT pine vs Trex vs TimberTech)

Stage 2 — Contractor verification

- Verified Virginia Class A Contractor License (required for any project over \$10,000 — search at dpor.virginia.gov)
- Confirmed contractor carries general liability insurance (\$1M minimum recommended)
- Confirmed contractor carries workers comp coverage
- Read at least 10 recent Google reviews and one BBB profile
- Got 2 written estimates (NOT phone quotes) — itemized line items, not lump sums
- Confirmed contractor pulls the permit (NOT "owner pulls" — owner-pull voids warranty and shifts liability)

Stage 3 — Site plan + permit application

- Site plan drawn to scale showing property boundaries, house footprint, proposed deck footprint, setbacks, easements
- Framing plan (joist size, spacing, beam size, post locations, footing locations)
- Elevation drawing (deck height above grade, railing height, stair geometry)
- Ledger board attachment detail (flashing, lag bolts, spacing, manufacturer specs)
- Footing schedule (diameter, depth — typically 36" below grade in NoVA for frost protection)
- Material specifications (lumber grade, composite brand/line, fastener type)
- Submitted application via the county portal:
 - Loudoun: LandMARC portal (2–4 weeks plan review)
 - Fairfax: PLUS portal (3–5 weeks plan review)
 - Prince William: ePortal (2–4 weeks plan review)
 - Arlington: APS portal (2–3 weeks plan review)
- Paid permit fee (\$150–\$500 depending on county and deck size)

Stage 4 — HOA architectural review (parallel with permit)

- Completed HOA application form (varies by community)



- Submitted site plan + elevation + material specs to ARB / DRC
- Submitted color samples or photos for railing, fascia, and decking material
- Paid HOA review fee (usually \$25–\$100)
- Confirmed approval timeline (Brambleton 14–21 days, Broadlands 14–21, Ashburn Village 18–21, Lansdowne 18–25, Virginia Run 21–35 in-person committee)
- Received written ARB / DRC approval letter — DO NOT START WORK WITHOUT IT

Stage 5 — Construction inspections (during build)

- Footing inspection scheduled BEFORE concrete is poured (inspector verifies hole depth, diameter, rebar)
- Framing inspection scheduled BEFORE decking is laid (inspector verifies ledger flashing, joist spacing, beam attachment, post hardware, blocking)
- Stair framing complete with code-compliant rise/run (max 7.75" rise, min 10" run in VA)
- Railing height verified (minimum 36" for residential decks 30"+ above grade; baluster spacing < 4")

Stage 6 — Final inspection + closeout

- Final inspection passed (inspector signs off on completed deck)
- Permit closed in county system (verify online — many homeowners assume this is automatic, it isn't)
- HOA notified of completion (some communities require photos of completed work)
- Contractor provided written warranty (most NoVA contractors offer 1–5 yr workmanship + manufacturer warranty on materials)
- Final lien waivers signed by contractor + subs
- Permit close-out letter saved with home records (matters at resale)

Common reasons projects get delayed

- **Owner pulls permit to save \$150:** voids warranty, shifts liability, and triggers re-inspection if work doesn't match the plan.
- **HOA review starts AFTER permit approval:** serial workflow adds 3–6 weeks. Always submit HOA + county simultaneously.
- **Ledger flashing not shown on plans:** instant red flag at framing inspection — reviewers know this is the #1 source of catastrophic deck failure.
- **Footing depth too shallow:** 36" below grade is the NoVA frost-line minimum; 24" concrete cylinders fail every time.
- **Setback violation:** pulled survey at the last minute, deck encroaches on the rear setback — tear-out and rebuild.

What Loudoun Decks does differently

We file the county permit and the HOA architectural package in parallel from contract day. We've handled the review process in every major NoVA HOA — packets typically clear first-round review because we maintain current submission templates per community. We also coordinate all three inspections (footing, framing, final) so you never have to be the inspection scheduler.

Call us at (571) 655-7207 or visit ldndecks.com/contact for a free 3D design consultation. Bring this checklist with you and we'll work through every line item together.

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This checklist is general guidance. Verify your specific county and HOA requirements before contracting.

Download a copy: ldndecks.com/downloads/nova-deck-permit-checklist-2026.pdf



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