



Building Bulletin

519-741-2312

building@kitchener.ca

www.kitchener.ca/building

Decking Products and Guard (Railing) Systems For Low-Rise (Part 9) Residential

Aug. 6, 2026
BB 2026-05

The City of Kitchener would like to remind homeowners, contractors, builders, and suppliers of the approval requirements for decking products and guard (railing) systems, including composite and other alternative materials.

The Ontario Building Code (OBC) prescribes specific materials—such as wood—for decking and guard construction. When alternative materials (e.g., composite, PVC, aluminum, steel, glass, etc.) are proposed, Canadian testing or Ontario engineering may be required.

Manufacturers are typically responsible for obtaining this testing or engineering, and not all products on the market meet Canadian standards.

If you intend to use or supply a product that requires additional evaluation, the City must have the required documentation before it can be approved for use and a permit can be issued.

Decking Products

The OBC only prescribes pressure-treated wood decking (min. 5/4" thick) as a decking materials. Visit our website to;

- View the current list of [Approved Alternative Decking Materials / Products](#).
- Learn how to **Request Approval for Decking Products** not on the list.

Guard (Railing) Systems

The OBC includes very prescriptive requirements for guard design and installation in **Supplementary Standard SB-7** of the OBC which includes **wood guards only**. Visit our website to;

- View the current list of [Approved Alternative Guard and Railing Systems](#).
- Learn how to **Request Approval for Additional Guard Systems** not on the list.

The purpose of this Building Bulletin is to remind customers of our requirements and to provide advance notice before materials are ordered. We recognize that new products continue to enter the market; however, these products must undergo appropriate testing and/or engineering to confirm compliance with OBC standards. It is also important to note that some manufacturers supply testing results from other countries with limited or no Canadian testing. Unfortunately, such testing cannot be accepted.

The City of Kitchener's goal is to review and inspect for compliance with the OBC on construction projects. We trust that if you have any additional questions or comments that you will not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

Matt Ruetz, C.E.T. CBCO

Municipal Building Official – Technical Specialist

519-783-8250

Matt.Ruetz@Kitchener.ca

Jordan MacLaughlin, CBCO

Manager of Permits

519-783-8197

Jordan.MacLaughlin@Kitchener.ca