

# LETTERS

## Oversized Bolt Holes a Problem?

In Mark Clement's article ("Time-Saving Guardrails") in the July issue, my eyes locked on to the size of the hole compared with the bolt. He oversized the bolt holes by  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch ( $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hole for  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch bolts). I used to oversize holes for bolts by  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch until the deck-ledger testing conducted at Virginia Tech was published in the March 2004 issue of your sister publication, *JLC* (jlconline.com). In the study, they oversized holes for  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch through-bolts by  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch to  $\frac{9}{16}$  inch and noted the importance of not oversizing holes.

*(Editor's note: According to the JLC article, the National Design Specification for Wood Construction requires bolt holes in wood to be a minimum of  $\frac{1}{32}$  inch to a maximum of  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch larger than the bolt diameter.)*

I checked with some local engineers as well as a couple of wood gurus at building conferences I attended. Many told me that oversizing holes reduces the holding strength of connections, both in shear and tension. The maximum oversize mentioned by most engineers I queried is  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch. Several wanted precisely sized holes in wood and allowed only slight oversizing in steel.

**Mike Guertin**  
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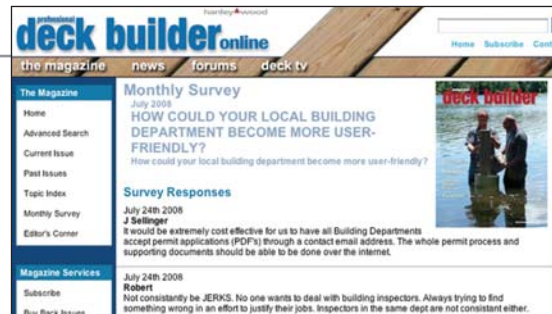
*Mark Clement replies: When I build decks in which the post is surface-mounted to the band joist, I drill holes the way Mike suggests. My experience with the system I wrote about in PDB, however, has been that drilling holes the same size as the bolt (or within  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch) makes plumbing the post nearly impossible. By combining blocking, shims, and construction adhesive, I get posts dead plumb while maintaining rock-solid mechanical connections and maintaining production.*

## Unlike most of the people you know, we want your two cents.

While it's nice to hear about what we're doing right, it's more interesting to hear about what we're doing wrong. If you saw something you loved or hated, or if you've got a tip that could help out other readers, we want to know.

E-mail us at [prodeck@hanleywood.com](mailto:prodeck@hanleywood.com) or mail letters to the address below:

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## How do your practices and preferences stack up against those of other deck builders?

Answer our Quick Vote and Survey at [deckmagazine.com](http://deckmagazine.com)

**Quick Vote:** Are you a hands-on deck builder or more of a manager?

**Survey:** Relative to local new-home building and other remodeling, how active is your deck-building market?

## Contractor Reward Program

I was disappointed that you didn't mention Azek Deck, a widely recognized brand in the industry, in Jefferson Kolle's article on contractor reward programs in the July issue. We have a successful Contractor Referral program, with 3 million Web site hits per month. Of those, 30 percent click on our "Where to Buy" link.

In order to participate in the Azek Deck Contractor Referral Program, a contractor must

- install an Azek deck,
- fill out the contact information form, which is available at this link: [azek.com/BuildAZEKDeck](http://azek.com/BuildAZEKDeck) (case sensitive),
- sign a hold harmless form.

Plus, an Azek territory sales manager must visit at least one Azek deck built by the contractor.

When contractors are signed up, they will receive

- a welcome letter with local rep support information,
- an Azek Deck Contractor Box containing marketing materials, brochures, color samples, and actual deck samples,
- an additional box of Azek Deck samples,
- Azek Deck leads,
- 50 deck brochures.

**Maureen Murray**  
Azek Building Products