

Framing and Hardware

These days, hidden fasteners are used about 50% of the time on synthetic decking and about 25% of the time when all types of decking are considered. To accommodate hidden fastener systems, most manufacturers of synthetic decking now sell boards with grooved edges. While there are differences among the various systems, they all automatically space the boards, and they keep fasteners completely out of sight on a completed deck.

Still, there are plenty of builders who face-screw decking or even nail it in place. They haven't bought into hidden fasteners, either because these systems are more labor intensive and more expensive to install, or because customers aren't demanding them, or because these builders are looking for a more robust connection between decking and framing. For them, manufacturers continue to refine their designs to make deck screws easier to install, with a cleaner entry that reduces the buildup of material around the screw head.

Flashing and metal-connector options continue to evolve, too, making it easier to properly detail ledgers and other framing members to prevent rot and meet building codes. The result? Safer, longer-lasting decks.



Joist Protection

When applied to the tops of joists, Deck Flash Barrier protects against moisture damage and decay. The self-adhering peel-and-stick membrane seals around fasteners to block water infiltration and can be used between PT lumber and galvanized metal or aluminum to prevent corrosion. It should be applied to clean, dry surfaces in temperatures of 45°F or higher; in colder temperatures, it can be attached with fasteners, or spray adhesive can be used to improve adhesion. Deck Flash Barrier comes in 3-inch by 75-foot rolls. Cofair also makes a 12-inch-wide version for flashing ledger connections. Cofair Products, 847.626.1500, cofair.com



Ledger Spacers

Deck2Wall Spacers promote air circulation and help prevent water and debris from collecting between the house wall and the deck ledger. Made from fiberglass-reinforced polypropylene, the 5/8-inch-thick spacers are 2 1/2 inches in diameter and have an 11/16-inch-diameter hole for a bolt or lag, and three holes for #6 or #8 screws. To install spacers, attach the ledger temporarily, drill the bolt holes, then remove the ledger and attach the spacers. The ledger can then be attached permanently. Test results of connections made with the spacers are available at the company's website. Decks Unlimited, 888.577.2237, deck2wallspacer.com



Clubhouse Fasteners

The Clubhouse ConnectClip comes in two packaging options: 50 square feet of hand-driven screws or 300 square feet of collated pneumatic nail-screws, which are shot in like a nail but can be backed out with a drill/driver. They're designed for main decking areas. Clubhouse Cortex Hidden Fasteners are designed for stairs, perimeter boards, and hard-to-reach areas. Both products are from a private-label partnership of Deceuninck North America and FastenMaster, which makes the Tiger Claw TC-G hidden fastener and Cortex screws. Deceuninck North America, 877.563.4251, clubhousedecking.com



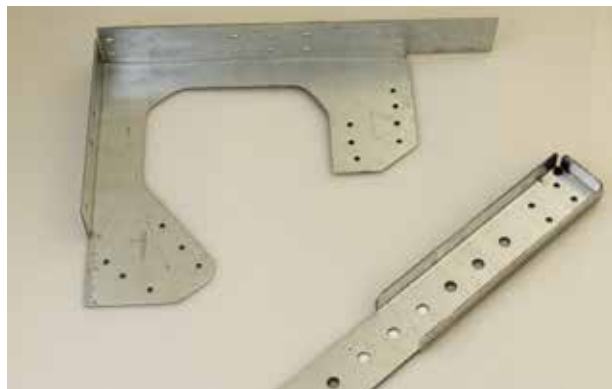
Preformed Ledger Flashing

Available in stainless steel, galvanized steel, and aluminum in 10-foot lengths, Everflashing preformed flashing has a profile that includes an integral pocket for the edge of a deck board and a 1/2-inch drip edge. Everflashing sits on top of the ledger with a leg extending roughly 4 inches up the wall, protecting the vulnerable ledger connection with the house. The flashing is designed to allow decking products to expand and contract. It comes in two widths: 1 1/2 inches, and 2 1/8 inches for use with ledgers that are spaced away from the house wall. Everflashing, 800.550.1667, ledgerflashing.com



Structural Post Inserts

Fairway Building Products' mounting insert can be used in place of wood for vinyl railing post sleeves. Unlike wood, the company says, these inserts won't crack, split, or rot. One version includes shims that can correct an out-of-level installation by as much as 5°. Structural posts can be used for 36-inch and 42-inch railing heights and can be installed on the framing of wood decks or on concrete or stone patios. They're made of galvanized steel with 1/8-inch-thick walls, welded 3 1/2-inch-square base plates, and two 3 3/4-inch polypropylene blocks that keep post sleeves centered. Fairway Building Products, 800.598.5245, fairwaybp.com



Galvanized Stair Brackets

GoPro Construction Solutions says that installing its Universal Stair Bracket is 50% faster than cutting stair stringers traditionally and requires smaller dimensional stringer stock. Made from 16-gauge G-185 hot-dipped steel and installed with screws, the reusable brackets allow a rise of between 6 and 8 inches and a run of between 9 and 11 1/2 inches; run and rise measurements are stamped into the metal. Brackets and base plates are designed for interior and exterior residential—but not commercial—use, and GoPro says the brackets meet code requirements. GoPro Construction Solutions, 877.577.4142, goproconstruction.com



A Promise of No Corrosion

Grip-Rite says its PrimeGuard MAX fasteners come with a lifetime warranty against corrosion while increasing total deck construction costs by only about 1 1/2%. Made from 316 stainless steel, PrimeGuard MAX screws and nails contain between 16% and 18% chromium, a maximum of 0.08% carbon, and as much as 3% molybdenum for the best available protection, the company says. The fasteners can be used in all types of treated wood as well as in cedar and redwood. They're available in 1-pound and 5-pound containers with bilingual labels. Grip-Rite, 800.676.7777, grip-rite.com



Protected Glulam

Rosboro's preservative-treated glulam beams and columns are designed for locations where they will be in full view. X-Beams are protected by a wood preservative that gives them a honey-colored hue and protects against decay, mold, bacteria, and insects, according to the company. Columns are treated with copper naphthenate, which provides ground-contact protection. Beams are available in widths of 3 1/2 inches and 5 1/2 inches and in depths ranging from 9 1/2 inches to 18 inches. Columns come in widths of 3 3/8 inches, 5 1/4 inches, and 7 inches, and depths of 3 1/2 inches, 5 1/2 inches, and 7 inches. Rosboro, 541.746.8411, rosboro.com



Connectors for Corrosive Environments

The new Gold Coat line of connectors and fasteners from USP Structural Connectors has two anti-corrosive layers: a zinc coating over the steel substrate plus a second layer the company says is a "nonreactive, organic polymer." The corrosion resistance rivals that of stainless steel but for a lower cost, the company says. Accelerated weather testing at Michigan State University found that the Gold Coat coating lasted up to three times as long as galvanized coatings, according to USP. The line includes angle clips, joist hangers, post anchors, rafter ties, wood screws, and nails. USP Structural Connectors, 800.328.5934, uspconnectors.com



Concealed Post Tie

The CPTZ Concealed Post Tie from Simpson Strong-Tie has a knife-like plate that is hidden in a saw kerf in the end of a post and secured with 1/2-inch-diameter galvanized pins. The tie keeps wood posts and columns 1 inch above the concrete, as required by code, reducing the risk of decay. It can be cast in place when the concrete is poured, or it can be secured with adhesives or mechanical anchors in a retrofit. The CPTZ is available in three sizes, for 4x4, 6x6, and 8x8 posts. Simpson Strong-Tie, 800.999.5099, strongtie.com



Fastener for Capstock Decking

Starborn's Headcote Cap-Tor is an auger-point #10 x 2 1/3-inch stainless steel screw with a star-recess drive. It's designed for use with capstock decking and trim from Azek, Versatex, Kleer, Trex, CertainTeed, and others. Using a Smart-Bit depth setter to install the screws will prevent marring the work surface, the company says. The product also works with traditional composite decking. The heads, which are undercut to cleanly penetrate capstock decking's hard outer layer, are coated in colors to match many decking products. Starborn Industries, 800.596.7747, starbornindustries.com