MEDIA ADVISORY
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DECK AND ROOF SAFETY ADVISORY

The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) would like to remind Boston residents of the importance of using precaution and common sense when utilizing decks, porches and roof tops for any outdoor activity. The department urges all to use structures such as: porches, balconies or decks for their intended purpose while keeping in mind its allotted capacity.

The following are useful safety tips to keep in mind when occupying outdoor structures:

- Use of “flat roofs” that have not been permitted for an assembly or recreational use by ISD is prohibited due to potential safety issues such as lack of railings, egress or structural integrity.

- In accordance with Article I, Section 1.05(b) of the Boston Fire Prevention Code it is illegal to use portable charcoal, propane and gas operated cooking grilles within a building or structure including: balconies, fire escapes, porches and roofs.

- When using a deck be aware of the load the deck is carrying. The amount of people and outdoor furniture must be considered when assessing if a structure is being utilized properly. Decks are constructed to withstand a reasonable load, provided the deck is designed and constructed to the standards of current applicable codes

- If these structures are in need of maintenance due to normal wear and tear, property owners must hire a licensed contractor and secure all required permits before work can proceed.

- Take the age of the structure into consideration. Homeowners should be aware of the structural integrity of their porches and decks. Older decks which were built to the standards of earlier editions of the state building and zoning codes may need to be updated.

For more information regarding deck and roof safety tips call the Building Inspector on duty at 617-635-5300.