

Electrical Plug and Joist Hangers for Decks

By: Inspector Weeks 613.290.3697

Question # 1

Having recently purchased a home built in the early 1970's I am wondering what type of plug this is in my bathroom. Is it safe to use?? J. Wyllie, Gatineau.

This type of plug is a "Razor Plug " designed to be used for an electric razor. It has (had) certain safety features to it that have since been updated. Running a hair dryer off it will most likely fry it, the plug that is. The outlet has an isolation transformer with a ground reference on the secondary razor outlet side. Today' electricians and electrical code require the use of a GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) plug in bathrooms or kitchens, anywhere close to water. This type of plug can easily be replaced with the new style, GFCI, grounded plug by any qualified electrician and from a safety point of view I would recommend doing so.



Question # 2

I am concerned about the construction of a newer deck at the front of my recently purchased home, the metal fasteners used and the extra blocks under the main beam. It just doesn't look right and a recent guest at my home suggested I get a second opinion.

Looking forward to your input, D. Terrell , Val des Monts.

You are correct to be concerned and your guest is right. I see four things wrong. First the extra blocks under the horizontal joists are questionable.

These blocks were most likely installed to compensate for the wrong size joist hangers used. Not the best way to support the structure of the deck. Second, as just mentioned, the joist hangers are the incorrect size for the lumber. Every size of wood has a specifically designed hanger that is manufactured for a certain size and use. These hangers need to be replaced, after the extra blocks are removed, with the proper sized hanger for the wood; in this case it appears to be 2x8 lumber. The third item that is wrong is the method used to attach the hanger. If you look closely at the hanger each one has specific holes on it to accommodate a fastener. Each and every one of these holes needs a nail or a screw, no exceptions. These hangers are designed by the manufacturer to withstand certain loads. Without the proper fasteners the hangers may fail which could result in a serious accident. The fourth item is the method used to attach the deck to the house. What I do not see are any large lag bolts through the lumber and into the main structure of the house. This too could compromise the integrity of the deck. I would strongly recommend installing some large galvanized fasteners with washers through the deck and into the main header of the house to ensure the deck stays put.



I welcome your questions please forward them to , Inspector Weeks ,c/o Peter Weeks Home Inspections PWHI@sympatico.ca or by phone at 613.290.3697.

Peter Weeks has been a Chelsea resident for 19 years. As a general contractor since 1988, he has been doing **Residential Home Inspections** for about four years. He is a **National Certificate Holder NCA # 0323**. He is an Associate Member of OAH (Ontario Association of Home Inspectors), CAHPI (Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors) and a member of the BBB in Good Standing.

Peter Weeks is a fully insured and qualified Home Inspector registered with the Royal LePage Relocation Services Program.

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