This handout is intended only as a guide to the subject matter covered herein and is based in part on the 2020 Indiana Residential Code. While every attempt has been made to insure the correctness of this handout, no guarantees are made to its accuracy or completeness. Responsibility for compliance with applicable codes and ordinances falls on the owner or contractor. For specific questions regarding code requirements, refer to the Indiana Building Code or contact your local Building Department.

GENERAL CAUTIONS
If you are considering constructing a sunroom or screened enclosure on your existing deck, please be aware that you will likely need to make significant alterations to the framing and supports of your deck in order to support the additional weight of a porch unless your deck was originally designed for that purpose. If you are constructing your sunroom or screened enclosure from scratch, you can design it without those concerns.

It is common practice to use “concrete piers” or “post footings” to support these additions. Be aware that these types of foundations are a significant compromise compared to continuous perimeter foundations used for the rest of the dwelling. Pier foundations are more susceptible to independent movement that can result in shifting of the structure resulting in cracked or jammed windows and doors and cracked wall finishes. Also, piers are usually sized just large enough to support anticipated loads based on average soil conditions leaving little safety factor. If your home is located in an area with clay or unpredictable soils, you may wish to consult with a soils engineer or structural engineer to aid in designing your foundation.

Warning: There have been numerous reports in recent years of pier footings being displaced by freezing conditions. Compliance with the code is not a guarantee of satisfactory performance.

When sunrooms or screened enclosures are constructed seven feet or more above grade, homeowners sometimes wish to enclose the underside with screening or a combination of walls and screening. Two problems can arise. First, if walls are securely placed under the perimeter of the porch and on top of a patio slab below, there is a risk frost will move the slab enough to place pressure on the structure above potentially causing damage. Second, if the construction is supported from the structure above, additional and unanticipated weight placed on the foundation may cause settlement. Again, if you anticipate these types of alterations in the future, plan your project accordingly.

PERMITS AND PLANS
A building permit is required to construct a sunroom or screened enclosure. Plans must be included with permit applications. Plans must include a site plan, cross sections, floor plans, and elevations. For more information on plans, see the handout on “Building Plans”.

You will also be required to obtain an Improvement Location Permit from the Department of Business and Neighborhood Services in Marion County. Please visit their website at https://www.indy.gov/activity/residential-development-permits for more information.
THE ENERGY CODE
Screened enclosures need not meet Energy Code requirements. Additions constructed for year-round use may need to meet all or a portion of the Energy Code depending on how the addition is designed and built. Because of the number of variables presented by varying designs and the Energy Code, it is recommended that discuss your plans for enclosed structures with an engineer early in the design stage to avoid any surprises.

FOUNDATIONS
Designs must result in a framing system to transfer all loads to the ground. This includes roof dead loads, snow loads, wall loads, floor dead loads, and floor live loads. Your plans should include detailed information on the sizing of all framing members. If you need assistance determining the size of beams, columns, and footings, you may wish to consult with a structural engineer.

FRAMING
Because the weight of a roofed addition is significantly greater than a deck, all framing members and connections will need to be larger and stronger. Columns and beams need to support roof as well as floor loads. Ledgers are not permitted to support beams and girders. They can only support joists. This means that the exterior wall of the home will need to be opened to allow beams to extend into the wall for support. Roof framing cannot be attached to fascia boards but must extend onto the top plate of the exterior wall. Because vaulted or cathedral ceilings are often desired, roof framing systems must be designed with a beam at the ridge since no wall ties or ceiling joists will be available to prevent walls from bowing. See the handout on Basic Wood Framing for additional information. All floors must be protected on the underside with a minimum 5/8” wood structural panel unless joists are 2X10 or 2X12 dimension lumber.

SAFETY GLAZING
Large windows are often popular. Windows adjacent doors, including patio doors, and windows exceeding certain size limitations must have tempered or laminated glass. The Building Department has a handout on safety glazing to help identify locations where protection is required.

GUARDS/GUARDRAILS
Floors enclosed with screening that are more than 30 inches above grade must have guard rails not less than 36 inches in height meeting guard requirements. Insect screening is not an acceptable substitute. To avoid installation of a guard, you may wish to start the screening 36 inches off the floor and have a solid wall below the screening. Or, you may construct the wall with balusters as a guard in accordance with the building code.

SIZING PIER FOOTINGS
Because there are so many variables in how these structures can be framed, there is no simple illustration that can be provided to simplify sizing of footings. Following is one example of how loads transfer to the footing. The total area of the roof (including overhangs) and floor supported by a member must be used in sizing that footing. Footing sizes are based on all accumulated loads. The following design loads are used:

- Roof loads – 60 psf
- Floor loads – 50 psf
- Wall loads – 80-120 plf (wall loads can vary depending on construction of the wall)
- Soil bearing – 1500 psf

**OTHER HANDOUTS**

The Building Department has a number of other handouts on fasteners, wood framing, stairs, and a host of other topics not covered in this handout.
BEAMS MAY NOT BE SUPPORTED ON LEDGERS

LEDGER

FLOOR FRAMING WITH BEAMS LET INTO DWELLING STRUCTURE

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MAXIMUM RIDGE BEAM SPANS (ft.-in.) FOR COMMON LUMBER SPECIES

AF&PA WOOD FRAME CONSTRUCTION MANUAL - 2001
LOAD PATHS MUST BE CONTINUOUS THROUGH THE STRUCTURE TO THE FOUNDATION

BEAMS OR GIRDER ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BE SUPPORTED BY LEDGERS UNLESS ENGINEERING IS PROVIDED. MINIMUM OF 1 1/2 INCHES OF BEARING REQUIRED AT END OF BEAM OR GIRDER WITH CONTINUOUS LOAD PATH TO FOUNDATION. BEAMS OR GIRDER MUST BE SIZED TO SUPPORT ALL LOADS INCLUDING WALL LOADS, FLOOR LOADS AND ROOF LOADS. OR, PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF SUPPORT.

IF YOU FIELD FRAME YOUR ROOF, YOU MUST PROVIDE CEILING JOISTS OR RAFTER TIES WITH THE RAFTERS FASTENED TO THE CEILING JOISTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOUR ROOF SPANS 12 FEET, THE PITCH IS 4:12, AND THE SPACING OF RAFTERS IS 24” O.C., SEVEN 16D NAILS ARE REQUIRED AT EACH RAFTER/CEILING JOIST CONNECTION.

IF YOU FIELD FRAME YOUR ROOF AND YOU DO NOT PROVIDE CEILING JOISTS OR RAFTER TIES, THE RIDGE FORMED BY RAFTERS SHALL BE SUPPORTED BY A BEAM DESIGNED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACCEPTED ENGINEERING PRACTICE.
TYING YOUR NEW ROOF INTO AN EXISTING ROOF
One of the more complicated facets of constructing a dwelling addition is framing the new roof into the old roof in such a way that you maintain the structural integrity of the existing dwelling and do not compromise the roofing in a way that will cause leaks.

If you frame your addition with a ridge beam, the loads placed on the beam must be transferred to the foundation at each end of the beam. At the house end of the beam, it is best to allow the beam to bear on a column that is supported by the exterior wall of the dwelling. Extending the load of the beam onto the existing roof system significantly complicates the transfer. If you provide a column to support the beam above the exterior wall of the dwelling, you must open the roof to allow the column to bear on the wall plate below the roof sheathing. As is usually the case, you will have an opening in the wall below for a patio door. The size of the header above this door must be checked to determine if it can support the additional load imposed by the beam above. If it is undersized, you will either need to replace the header, reduce the size of the opening, or transfer the load from the beam to the foundation via a different route. If you choose to extend the load on the beam to the existing roof system, you will need to consult with a structural engineer and have them prepare a design.

Once your roof framing is complete you will need to tie the new roofing into the existing roofing. This almost always means portions of the existing roofing will need to be removed. The valley must either be provided with flashing or the roofing may be a closed valley. In either case, follow the roofing manufacturer’s installation instructions. The use of caulking or roofing cement to seal the joint between the new and the old roof is not acceptable.
There are a number of things going on in this photo. It shows the ridge beam continuing on to the existing roof. But, there is also a "notch" in the existing roof where a column would go that will later support the end of the beam at the addition so that none of the roof load from the addition will be supported on the existing roof. Also shown are two plumbing vents that need to be extended through the roof. Having a plumbing vent in the middle of a valley is an invitation for a roof leak. These are far enough away. The last arrow shows the existing roofing cut out along the new valley in preparation for tying in the new roof.