



**For Immediate Release**  
**April 25, 2016**

**CREIA Advises Homeowners to Have Decks and Balconies Inspected**  
***--In observance of May is National Deck Safety Month***

Aliso Viejo, April 2016: The California Real Estate Inspection Association (CREIA) advises homeowners to have their decks and balconies inspected. Decks are without a doubt one of the most dangerous areas on a property. Most experts agree that the average service life of a wood deck is around 10-15 years. Many older decks were built prior to the codes providing any significant guidance. Unfortunately, wood decks are still viewed as a DIY project that can be built over a long weekend or something that the gardener or the handyman can do.

The reality is that wood decks are complicated and they are failing at an alarming rate. Skip Walker, Master CREIA Inspector indicated, "About 90 percent of decks fail at the connection to the building. Guardrails are the second highest point of failure. The connection between the deck and stairs rounds out the top three." Between the years 2000 and 2007 deck collapses reportedly increased by 21 percent per year. Failures are so common, that the media often do not cover them unless the event was unusually spectacular, such as the 2015 Berkeley Kitteridge balcony collapse. Between 2000 and 2006, there were at least 30 deaths reported as a direct result of deck failures. Over 75 percent of people that are on a deck when it collapsed were seriously injured or killed.

A 2010 study by Legacy Services LLC estimates that between 2003 and 2007 there were about 224,000 injuries on decks, balconies, and porches requiring a hospital or doctor's visit. Of those, 6,000 to 8,000 serious injuries per year were the result of deck/balcony structural failures.

Proper inspection of wood decks and balconies is critical. If we assume that a conservative 10 percent of existing decks are in need of significant repair or outright replacement that means the total number of unsafe decks is around four million. In reality that number is probably much higher.

Skip Walker, a CREIA Master Inspector discusses deck safety in this online video:  
<https://vimeo.com/162915040>

If you are unsure or feel you have not had your deck or balcony checked for sometime, contact a home inspector.

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CREIA is dedicated to consumer protection and education. Go to [WWW.CREIA.ORG/FIND-AN-INSPECTOR](http://WWW.CREIA.ORG/FIND-AN-INSPECTOR) to locate a qualified CREIA inspector near you.

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