



Building Design Authority

Information Bulletin

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By: Chief Building Official
For Public Use

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The purpose of this information bulletin is to clarify when a licensed professional is required for the design of a structure. In addition to the requirements below, any time design documents are created by someone other than the property owner, the construction documents shall be signed by the designer.

UNLICENSED INDIVIDUALS may design only the following types of structures:

Business and Professions Code 5537

*Single-family dwellings of not more than two stories and basement in height.

*Multiple dwellings containing not more than four dwelling units of woodframe construction of not more than two stories and basement in height and no more than four dwelling units per lot.

*Garages or other structures appurtenant to the dwellings described above of woodframe construction not more than two stories and basement in height.

*Agricultural and ranch buildings of wood frame construction, unless the building official having jurisdiction determines that an undue risk to the public health, safety, or welfare is involved.

- * NOTE: If any portion of the structures described above does not meet the conventional woodframe requirements described in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations or in the building codes of the local jurisdiction, then the building official having jurisdiction shall require the plans, calculations, and specifications for that portion of the structure to be prepared and signed and sealed by a licensed civil or structural engineer or a licensed architect.

Business and Professions Code 5538

Store fronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, or other appliances or equipment, including any work necessary to install these items, or any alterations or additions to any building necessary to install these items, **as long as the alterations do not affect the structural system or **safety of the building.**

CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS may design non-structural or non-seismic elements within the interior of a building.

CONTRACTORS may design electrical or mechanical systems or facilities for work to be performed by that contractor.

CIVIL ENGINEERS may design any structure of any type EXCEPT public schools and hospitals.

ARCHITECTS may design any building of any type EXCEPT the structural portion of a hospital.

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS may design any structure of any type.

****Plans prepared for the following work shall be deemed as affecting the safety of a building or its occupants and shall be stamped and signed by a registered engineer or architect:**

- New buildings, additions to existing buildings
- Projects with interior or exterior structural alterations
- Alteration to any engineered element of construction
- Interior alteration with a change in occupancy
- Interior alteration with walls and partitions over 6' in height or ceiling work which cover a floor area greater than 3,000 square feet in B, F-1, F-2, S-1, S-2 and M occupancies.
- Storage racks over 5'9" in height or more than 400 pounds loaded
- Remodeling projects with changes to 1-hr rated corridors, fire barriers, fire partitions or fire walls
- Alteration with changes to exiting requirements
- Hazardous occupancies: H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5
- Assembly occupancies: A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4 and A-5
- Alterations or additions to restaurants, grocery stores and other food facilities
- Alterations or additions that require upgrading or modifications to accessibility design and construction such as path-of-travel, accessible toilet rooms, etc
- Tanks and vessels
- Machinery and equipment requiring design per the 2010 CBC and ASCE 7-05 Chapters 13 and 15
- Roof mounted mechanical equipment exceeding 400 pounds
- School and day care occupancies E and I-4
- Hospital occupancies: I-1, I-2, and I-3
- Projects with S-1, S-2, F-1 and F-2 occupancies
- Hotel, motel, condominium and apartment occupancies classified as R-1 and R-2 occupancies
- Projects with mixed occupancies
- Remodeling projects in a high-rise (having floors over 75' in height) building
- Lateral force resisting systems not complying with CRC Conventional Frame requirements
- Cripple walls exceeding 4' in height or adjacent to garage door openings
- Any project deemed by Building Official to require professional design by a California Registered Engineer or Licensed Architect

Structural and Civil Engineers are licensed by the Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. Any questions regarding Structural or Civil Engineers, the practice of engineering, or the Professional Engineers Act (Business and Professions Code sections 6700-6799) should be directed to the California Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors at 2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 300, Sacramento, CA, 95833; (866) 780-5370; <http://www.pels.ca.gov>.

Architects are licensed by the California Architects Board. Any questions regarding architects, the practice of architecture, or the Architects Practice Act (Business and Professions Code section 5500-5610.7) should be directed to the California Architects Board at 2420 Del Paso Road, Suite 105, Sacramento, CA, 95834; (916) 574-7220; <http://www.cab.ca.gov>; cab@dca.ca.gov.

The design and construction of public schools is regulated by the Division of the State Architect (DSA). Any questions regarding Education Code section 17302 should be directed to DSA at 1102 Q Street, Suite 5100, Sacramento, CA, 95811; (916) 445-8100; <http://www.dsa.ca.gov>.

The design and construction of hospitals is regulated by the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD). Any questions regarding Health and Safety Code section 129805 should be directed to OSHPD at 1600 9th Street, Room 420, Sacramento, CA, 95814; (916) 654-3362; <http://www.oshpd.ca.gov>.

Applicable Statutes:

Business and Professions Code sections 5500.1, 5537, 5537.1, 5537.5, 5538, 5800, 6731, 6736, 6737, and 6737.1.

Education Code section 17302

Health and Safety Code section 129805