



Professional Plan Preparation Requirements

WHAT REQUIRES SIGNATURE OF A CALIFORNIA PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER OR CALIFORNIA REGISTERED ARCHITECT?

All plans submitted for permit are required to be signed by either a California Professional Engineer or California Registered Architect, as specified in Sections 5537 and 6737 of the California Business & Professions Code **with the following exceptions for exempt structures:**

- Single family dwellings of conventional wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height.
- Multiple dwellings containing not more than four dwelling units (total of existing plus new) of wood frame construction on any lawfully divided lot. Total of four dwelling units in clusters such as apartments or condominiums,
- Garages or other structures appurtenant to single-family dwelling or multiple dwellings not more than two stories and basement in height.
- Agricultural and ranch buildings unless the building official deems that an undue risk to the public health, safety or welfare is involved.

However, if any portion of any structure exempted by these sections, deviates from the requirements for conventional light wood-frame construction or tables of limitation for wood frame construction found in Chapter 23 (Section 2320) of the California Building Code as adopted by the City of San Bernardino, then the Building Official may require the preparation of plans, drawings, specifications, or calculations for that portion a Professional Engineer or Registered Architect. The documents for that portion shall bear the stamp and signature of the licensee who is responsible for their preparation.

Sections 5538 and 6745 of the California Business & Professions Code:

These Sections of the California Business & Professions Code do not prohibit any person from furnishing plans for any of the following:

- Nonstructural store fronts, interior alterations, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, or other appliances or equipment.
- Any nonstructural work necessary to provide for their installation. However, an unlicensed person **may not** prepare plans for those alterations that will change or affect any components of the structural system or safety of the building or its occupants. Safety of the building includes such items as exiting, fire, structural, and other code requirements.

Examples of Projects that Require Professional Preparation

Except as specifically noted above, here are some examples of projects that require plans to be prepared, signed, and stamped by a California Professional Engineer or California Registered Architect:

- New non-exempt buildings and additions to existing non-exempt buildings,
- Projects with interior or exterior structural alterations,
- Interior alteration with an occupancy change,
- All Group A (Assembly) occupancies,
- All Group E (School and Day Care) occupancies,
- All Group F (Factory and Industrial) occupancies,
- All Group H (Hazardous) occupancies,
- All Group I (Institutional) occupancies,
- All Group R, Division 2 or 6 Occupancies, and non-exempt Division 1 occupancies,
- Projects with mixed occupancies,
- Interior alteration with walls and partitions over 5 feet 9 inches in height or ceiling work which cover a floor area greater than 3,000 square feet, for Groups B, S-1, S-2 or M occupancies,
- Storage racks over 8 feet in height,
- Remodeling projects that creates or alters 1-hr fire rated corridors, fire rated occupancy separations or area separation walls.
- Alteration which changes the means of egress (exit) requirements,
- Tanks and vessels,
- Nonstructural components or equipment attached to buildings requiring design per California Building Code Section 1632.1 (generally equipment weighing over 400 pounds)
- Mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems for non-exempt buildings,
- Remodeling projects in high-rise (having floors over 75 feet in height) building,
- Lateral force-resisting systems utilizing poles embedded in the ground,
- Any project deemed by Building Official to require design by a California Professional Engineer or California Registered Architect.

Stamp, and Wet Stamp/Signature Requirements of Plans

- All plan check submittals (including the initial and final submittals) will require a wet stamp and wet signature on the cover sheet (with the sheet index) and on the first page of calculations, specifications, and reports.
- All other sheets shall be stamped and signed (original or electronic copy).

Aiding and Abetting Unlicensed Persons

What constitutes aiding and abetting?

Aiding and abetting occurs when a California licensed architect:

- Assists unlicensed individuals to circumvent the Architects Practice Act. (B & P Code Section 5500 et seq.)
- Stamps and signs documents which have not been prepared by the architect or in the architect's office or under the architect's immediate and responsible direction.
- Permits his or her name to be used for the purpose of assisting any person, not an architect, to evade the provisions of the Architects Practice Act.

(See: B & P Code Sections 5582, 5582.1, and Title 16, Section 135 and 151 of the CCR for architects, and similarly for engineers under B & P Code Section 6735):

Violations

The City of San Bernardino actively enforces the foregoing provisions and is proactive in reporting violations to the appropriate governing board.