



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY BUILDING DEPARTMENT

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WHO CAN PREPARE PLANS?

Professional Services from a California Licensed Profession is generally required and may include design, analysis, and evaluation as well as consultation and technical advice for the following:

Foundations	Bridges
Grading Plans	Flood Level Studies
Commercial Buildings	Complex Electrical Systems
Seismic Strengthening for (retrofit) Projects	Dams
Complex Houses or Wooden Buildings	Water Supply Systems
Drainage and Sewage Disposal Systems	Improvements for Subdivisions (Infrastructure)
Masonry Walls and Retaining Walls	Structural Beams and Trusses

California law allows persons not licensed as architects, or registered as engineers, to design certain types of buildings or parts of buildings. California Business and Professions Code sections 5537 and 6737.1.

Generally, an unlicensed person can design:

- single-family dwellings of conventional wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height;
- multiple dwellings containing no more than four dwelling units of conventional wood frame construction, not more than two stories and basement in height, and not more than four dwelling units per lot;
- garages or other structures added to single-family dwellings of conventional wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height;
- agricultural and ranch buildings of conventional wood frame construction;
- nonstructural storefronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, or other appliances or equipment, including nonstructural work necessary to install them; and
- nonstructural building alterations or additions necessary for the installation of storefronts, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, appliances, or equipment.

Provisions for conventional wood frame construction are contained in Chapter 23 of the California Building Code.

The expertise of a professional engineer or architect may be beneficial to your project even if not required by state law. Helpful information is available at:

California Architects Board: <http://www.cab.ca.gov/default.htm>

California's Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors: <http://www.dca.ca.gov/pels/>