



City of Imperial Beach, California

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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WHO MAY PREPARE PLANS / WHEN A LICENSED PROFESSIONAL IS REQUIRED

Sections 107.1 of the California Building Code and R106.1 of the California Residential Code indicate that the Building Official may require plans and specifications to be prepared and designed by a registered design professional licensed by the State to practice as such.

In accordance with the provisions of the California Business and Professions Code, the plans for all buildings and structures shall be prepared and each sheet shall be signed by a person licensed by the State of California as a civil engineer, structural engineer, or architect. A registered design professional shall also sign the first sheet of the engineering calculations for such buildings and structures.

The following exemptions to the above requirements may be permitted, unless the buildings and structures are determined by the Building Official to be of an unusual nature or where the structural stability of such buildings or structures is not evident to the Building Official. Engineering calculations and/or the signature of a licensed engineer or architect may nevertheless be required in such cases.

Plans that can be prepared by an unlicensed person

Per California Business & Professions Code Sections [5537](#) & [6737](#), any person may prepare plans, drawings or specifications for the structures listed below providing they have been designed in substantial compliance with the conventional framing requirements for wood framed construction per Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations or Tables of Limitations for wood frame construction in Chapter 23 of the California Building Code:

1. Single family dwellings not more than two stories plus basement in height.
2. Multiple dwellings containing no more than four dwelling units and not more than two stories and basement in height, limited to a maximum of four dwelling units on any lot.
3. Garages or other structures appurtenant to single-family dwelling or multiple dwellings not more than two stories and basement in height.
4. Agricultural and ranch buildings unless the building official deems that an undue risk to the public health, safety or welfare is involved

Per California Business & Professions Code Sections [5538](#) & [6745](#), the following may also be designed by any person:

1. For nonstructural or nonseismic storefronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, or other appliances or equipment.
2. For any nonstructural or nonseismic work necessary to provide for their installation.

3. For any nonstructural or nonseismic alterations or additions to any building necessary to or attendant upon the installation of those storefronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, appliances, or equipment, provided those alterations do not change or affect the structural system or safety of the building.

Unlicensed persons 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.

Plans required to be designed by an Architect or Engineer:

The following are examples of work requiring plans which are stamped and signed by an engineer or architect registered by the State of California.

- 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 (Industrial) Occupancies
- Group R-1, R-2 or R-4 Occupancies
- All Group S (Storage) Occupancies
- Interior alterations with walls and partitions over 5 feet 9 inches in height or ceiling work which cover floor areas greater than 3,000 square feet, for Groups B, S-1, S2, OR M Occupancies
- Storage racks over 8 feet in height
- Tanks and vessels
- Machinery and equipment support and anchorage, (there may be exceptions)
- Lateral force resisting systems utilizing poles embedded in the ground
- Any other project deemed by the Building Official to require professional designs by a California Registered Engineer or Architect.

Design Limitations for Professionals:

The following limitations for professionals are based on the California Health and Safety (HSC) and the Business and Professional Code (BPC). Please note that electronic signatures are accepted per California Code of regulations Title 16, Section 411.

Architects: May design any building of any type except the structural portion of a hospital (HSC section 15048 and BPC sections 5500.1 and 6737).

Landscape Architects: May not “practice, or offer to practice, architecture or engineering in any of its various recognized branches.” (BPC section 5615)

Civil Engineers: May design any building except hospitals and schools (HSC section 39148, BPC sections 5537.5, 6731, 6735, and Education Code section 39148).

Structural Engineers: No limitations. May design any building of any type (BPC sections 6637.1, 6731, and 6736)