



City of Long Beach
Department of Development Services
Building and Safety Bureau

**Policy on When a Registered Design
Professional is Required**

Information
Bulletin

BU-013

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The purpose of this information bulletin is to assist owners, tenants, designers and contractors in understanding the laws and regulations governing when construction documents are required to be prepared, stamped and signed for non-exempt projects. To ensure that buildings or structures are designed to meet code standards that protect the health, safety and welfare of the public, the Department relies on the State Licensing Boards to ensure that Registered Design Professionals (i.e., Professional Engineers or Registered Architects) are competent and licensed in the State of California to prepare construction documents.

1. WHEN ARE CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO BE PREPARED, SIGNED AND STAMPED BY A REGISTERED DESIGN PROFESSIONAL LICENSED IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA (I.E., PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER OR REGISTERED ARCHITECT)?

All construction documents submitted for building permits are required to be prepared, signed and stamped by a Registered Design Professional, except as follows:

a. Sections 5537 and 6737 of the California Business & Professions Code and Chapters 18.12 and 18.24 of the Long Beach Municipal Code:

These sections provide the following exceptions for construction documents that have been designed in substantial compliance with conventional framing requirements for wood frame construction found in the most recent edition of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations or tables of limitation for wood frame construction, as defined by the applicable building code duly adopted by the local jurisdiction or the state.

An unlicensed person may prepare construction documents for the following:

- Single-family dwellings of wood frame construction not more than one story in height¹.
- Multiple dwellings containing no more than four dwelling units of wood frame construction not more than one story in height¹ on any lawfully divided lot.
- Garages or other structures appurtenant to single-family dwelling or multiple dwellings of wood frame construction not more than one story in height¹.
- Agricultural and ranch buildings of wood frame construction 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 Section 5537(a) of the California Business & Professions Code deviates from substantial compliance with conventional framing requirements for wood frame construction found in the most recent edition of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations or tables of limitation for wood frame construction, as defined by the applicable building code duly adopted by the local jurisdiction or the state, Department shall require the preparation of construction documents for that portion by, or under the responsible control of, a Registered Design Professional. The construction documents for that portion shall bear the stamp and signature of the licensee who is responsible for their preparation.

b. 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 construction documents for any of the following:

- Nonstructural or nonseismic store fronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, or other appliances or equipment.
- Any nonstructural or nonseismic alterations or additions necessary to provide for their installation.

However, an unlicensed person may not prepare construction documents for those alterations that will change or affect any components of the **structural system** or **safety** of the building or its occupants.

Except as specifically noted above, here are some examples of projects that would require construction documents to be prepared, signed and stamped by a Registered Design Professional:

- New buildings and additions to existing buildings,
- Projects with structural alterations,
- All Groups A (Assembly), E (Educational and Day Care), F (Factory and Industrial), H (High-Hazard), I (Institutional), L (Research Laboratories), R-1, R-2, R-3.1 or R-4 (Residential) Occupancies,
- Projects with mixed occupancies,
- Interior alteration with an occupancy change,
- Alteration, repair or rehabilitation projects that will change or affect fire-resistance-rated constructions, fire-protection systems or means of egress (exit) requirements,
- Nonstructural component or equipment attached to building requiring seismic design per Chapter 13 of ASCE 7 Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures,
- All new construction of buildings and portion of buildings, including substantial improvements to buildings, located within flood hazard areas that are subject to Section 1612 of the California Building Code or ASCE 24 Flood Resistant Design and Construction,
- Any project not deemed exempt by the Building Official.

2. WHAT CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SIGNED AND WET STAMPED?

Sections 5536.1 and 5536.2 of the California Business & Professions Code requires as a conditions precedent to the issuance of the building permit the signature and stamp on the construction documents by the person who prepared or was in responsible control of the construction documents. To ensure compliance with these sections, the Department may require that each sheet of the original construction documents, including the first page or cover sheet of the calculations, specifications and reports (if any), shall bear the seal or wet stamp (including the licensee's name, license number and expiration date) and signature of the Registered Design Professional. Copies of the original construction documents that bear the seal or stamp and signature of the Registered Design Professional is deemed acceptable as long as the wet stamp and signature are on the original construction documents.

FOOTNOTE 1. *The architectural drawings for this type of building up to two stories may be prepared by an unlicensed person.*