



## CITY OF PALM DESERT

Building & Safety Department

73-510 Fred Waring, Palm Desert, CA (760) 776-6420

### PLANS PREPARED & SIGNED BY CALIFORNIA LICENSED ARCHITECT AND REQUESTING COPIES OF ARCHIVED PLANS

#### WHAT REQUIRES A SIGNATURE OF A CALIFORNIA PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER OR CALIFORNIA LICENSED ARCHITECT?

All plans submitted for permit are required to be signed by either a California Professional Engineer or California Licensed Architect, **except as follows:**

##### 1. Sections 5537 and 6737 of the California Business & Professions Code:

These sections of the Business & Professions Codes provide the following exceptions for building plans that have been designed in accordance with 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 plans, drawings or specifications for the following:

- Single-family dwelling of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height.
- Multiple dwellings containing no more than four dwelling units of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height. However, this paragraph shall not be construed as allowing an unlicensed person to design multiple clusters of up to four dwelling units each to form apartment or condominium complexes where the total exceeds four units on any lawfully divided lot.
- Garages or other structures appurtenant to single-family dwelling, of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height.
- Agricultural and ranch buildings of wood frame construction, *unless the building official having jurisdiction deems that an undue risk to the public health, safety, or welfare is involved.*

However, if any portion of any structure exempted by this section 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, the building official having jurisdiction shall require the preparation of plans, drawings, specifications, or calculations for that portion by, or under the responsible control<sup>1</sup> of, a licensed architect or registered engineer. The documents for that portion shall bear the stamp and signature of the licensee who is responsible for their preparation. Substantial compliance for purposes of this section is not intended to restrict the ability of the building officials to approve plans pursuant to existing law and is only intended to clarify the intent of Chapter 405 of the Statutes of 1985.

##### 2. 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 or no seismic storefronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, or other appliances or equipment, including nonstructural or non-seismic work necessary to provide for their installation.
- However, an unlicensed person may not design any component that changes or affects the safety of any building, including but not limited to structural or seismic components or its occupants.

**NOTE:** Building officials may require plans, computations, and specifications to be prepared and designed by an engineer or architect licensed by the state to practice as such even if not required by state law.

<sup>1</sup>The phrase "responsible control" means that amount of control over the content of all architectural instruments of service during their preparation that is ordinarily exercised by architects applying the required professional standard of care. (B&P 5535.1)

**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<sup>2</sup>:**

- New buildings or additions to existing 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 1 or 2 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 component or equipment attached to building requiring design per Section 1632.1
- 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
- All garden walls over 6 feet in height and all retaining walls

### **WHAT REQUIRES STAMP and SIGNATURE?**

Title sheet of the calculations, specifications, reports and every sheet of the plans prepared by a licensed architect or engineer shall bear the seal or stamp (with the expiration date or the license) and signature of the architect or engineer at each (including initial) submittal.

*<sup>2</sup>Plumbing, Electrical and Mechanical system design content within the scope of exemption of architectural or engineering licensure shall be designed by licensed contractor performing services in the classification for which the license is issued. Those services may include the preparation of shop and field drawings for work which he or she has contracted or offered to perform, and designing systems and facilities which are necessary to the completion of contracting services which he or she has contracted or offered to perform. Plans shall bear the contractor's name, company, license, telephone number and wet signature. (B&P 5537.2)*

### **BUILDING DESIGN LIMITATIONS**

#### **ARCHITECTS**

May design any building of any type except:

- Structural portion of a hospital ( Applicable Statutes, Section 129805 of Health & Safety Code Sections 5500.1 and 6737 of Business & Professions Code)

#### **CIVIL ENGINEERS**

May design any building of any type except:

- Hospitals
- Schools (Applicable Statutes, Section 129805 of Health & Safety code, Section 17302 of Education Code Sections 5537.5, 6731, and 6735 of Business & Professions Code)

#### **STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS**

May design any building of any type except:

- No limitations (Applicable Statutes, Sections 5537.1, 6731, and 6736 of Business & Professions Code)

**In order to make copies of plans from our archives, we ask that you follow this procedure:**

1. Come to the Building and Safety Department, review the plans to select the pages that you are interested in copying and determine the name of the licensed, registered, or certified professional to retrieve the contact information from the State website or company employed by. The most recent address of the licensed, registered, or certified professional is available from the California State Board of Architectural Examiners-<http://www.cab.ca.gov/>
2. Building and Safety staff will provide the Affidavit Request form that the applicant will mail Certified to the licensed architect or engineer in question. The design professional and current property owner must wet sign the form. We do not accept the letters by fax or e-mail.
3. When applicant receives form back from design professional and property owner with wet signatures bring form into the Building and Safety Department to retrieve hard copy or email of pages requested. It may take staff up to 10 business days to provide requested copies.
4. If you can't find the current contact information for the licensed, registered, or certified professional send a certified return receipt letter to the last known address. When you receive notice from the Post Office as undeliverable then bring in the envelope that states "undeliverable" and that will suffice for approval.
5. The cost of the copies is \$1.00 per page.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Department of Building and Safety (760) 776-6420.