

POLICY ON BUILDING PLANS REQUIRED TO BE PREPARED, WET OR ELECTRONICALLY SIGNED AND STAMPED BY A CALIFORNIA PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER OR CALIFORNIA LICENSED ARCHITECT

All plans and written records of computations submitted for a permit are required to be signed by either a California Professional Engineer or California Licensed Architect with the following exemptions as permitted by Section 2308, Section 2309 of the Los Angeles Building Code (LABC), Section R301 of the Los Angeles Residential Code (LARC), or Sections 5537, 5538, 6737.1, and 6745 of the California Business & Professions Code (CBPC).

A. Exemptions:

1. Any conventional light frame wood construction in compliance with LABC Section 2308, Section 2309 and LARC Section R301. However, per Section 2308.2.1 of the LABC, this exemption cannot be applied to structures exceeding one story in height in the Seismic Design Categories D and E. (LABC Section 2308, Section 2309 and LARC Section R301).
2. Single family dwellings of wood frame construction with no more than two stories and basement in height. (CBPC Sections 5537 and 6737.1)
3. 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. (CBPC Sections 5537 and 6737.1)
4. Garages or other structures appurtenant to buildings described under subdivision (2) and (3), of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height. (CBPC Sections 5537 and 6737.1)
5. 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. (CBPC Sections 5537 and 6737.1)
6. Non-structural or non-seismic store fronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinet work, furniture, or other appliances or equipment. (CBPC Sections 5538 and 6745)
7. Any non-structural or non-seismic work necessary to provide for their installation. (CBPC Sections 5538 and 6745)

8. For any non-structural or non-seismic alterations or additions to any building necessary to or attendant upon the installation of such store fronts. Interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinet work, furniture, appliances or equipment; provided such alterations do not affect the structural safety of the building. (CBPC Sections 5538 and 6745)

However, if any portion of any structure that is exempted by these sections, deviates from the requirements for conventional light wood-frame construction or tables of limitation for wood frame construction found in LABC Section 2308 and LARC Section R301, then the plans and written records of computations submitted for the permit are required to be signed by either a California Professional Engineer or California Licensed Architect.

Moreover, when the building/structure is one story with basement or more than one story in height, structural plans and calculations shall be submitted for the permit and signed by either a California Professional Engineer or California Licensed Architect as required by LABC Section 106.3.3.2 or LARC Section R301.1.3. However, only the architectural drawings for this type of building/structure up to two stories in height with a basement may be prepared by an unlicensed person per Section 5537 of the California Business and Professions Code.

B. Examples of projects that require a wet or electronic stamp and signature of a California Professional Engineer or California Registered Architect:

- a. New buildings, additions to existing buildings¹,
- b. Projects with interior or exterior structural alterations,
- c. Interior alteration with an occupancy change²,
- d. All Group A (Assembly) Occupancies,
- e. All Group E (School and Day Care) Occupancies,
- f. All Group F (Factory and Industrial) Occupancies³,
- g. All Group H (Hazardous) Occupancies,
- h. All Group I (Institutional) Occupancies,
- i. All Group R Occupancies², except non-structural alterations within individual units
- j. Remodeling Projects in a high-rise (as defined in LABC Section 202) buildings³,
- k. Projects with mixed occupancies³,
- l. Interior alteration with walls and partitions over 5 feet 9 inches in height or ceiling work for Groups B, S-1, S-2 or M Occupancies³,
- m. Storage racks over 8 feet in height,
- n. Alteration which changes the means of egress (exit) requirements,
- o. Remodeling projects that creates or alters fire rated corridors, fire rated occupancy separations or area separation walls,

¹ Except for those projects exempted by Section A.1

² Except for non-structural or non-seismic interior alterations within tenant/unit space, which do not modify fire rated assemblies and location of exits

³ Except for wood partitions with a maximum of 10'-0" height, continuously supported at top and bottom or light gauge metal studs with LA City approval (Research Report) and allowable span according to the LARR and continuously supported at top and bottom

- p. Tanks and vessels (Only structural plans and details),
- q. Non-structural component or equipment attached to buildings requiring design per Chapter 13 of ASCE 7-10,
- r. Suspended ceiling dropped more than 6 feet below the structural floor or roof system per LABC Section 1613.8.1,
- s. Lateral force resisting systems utilizing poles embedded in the ground,
- t. Any project deemed by the Building Official to require a design by a California Professional Engineer or California Licensed Architect.

C. WET OR ELECTRONIC STAMP AND SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS

Per CBPC Section 6735(a), each sheet of plans prepared by a licensed engineer or architect that are permitted or that are to be released for construction are required to be signed and sealed or stamped date and the date of signing and sealing or stamping immediately below or next to the signature and seal.

Specifications, calculations, and reports prepared by an engineer or architect are required to be signed and sealed or stamped with the date of signing and sealing or stamping, except that if it contains multiple pages this information shall appear at a minimum on the title sheet, cover sheet, or signature sheet.

In the California State Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors Rules (16 CCR §411), the required seal on the plans shall be capable of leaving a permanent ink representation, an opaque and permanent impression, or an electronically-generated representation on the documents. The signature may be applied to the documents electronically. Preprinting of blank forms with the seal or signature, the use of decals of the seal or signature, or the use of a rubber stamp of the signature is prohibited.

Per LABC Section 106.3.3.2, plans for structures which do not require engineers' or architects' signatures according to the California Business and Professions Code, but do require some structural design, the person responsible for such design shall sign and seal or stamp the sheets of the plans having engineering details thereon and the calculation in the manner specified above. For example, in the case of a two-story single family dwelling with architectural plans prepared by an unlicensed person – as allowed by CBPC Section 5537 – only the structural drawings need to be signed and sealed or stamped by a licensed engineer or architect; the architectural plans need not be signed.