



**City of Lathrop  
Building Department**

# WHO MAY PREPARE PLANS

390 Towne Centre Drive – Lathrop, CA 95330  
Email: [PermitOffice@ci.lathrop.ca.us](mailto:PermitOffice@ci.lathrop.ca.us)  
Phone #: (209) 941-7270

**THIS POLICY ESTABLISHES REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, AND EXEMPTIONS TO WHO MAY PREPARE CONSTRUCTION PLANS FOR PERMIT APPLICATION SUBMITTALS, DEPENDING ON PROJECT SCOPE. PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION BELOW**

The Building Official of the City of Lathrop reserves the right to require plans prepared and designed by a registered design professional, that is, an engineer or architect licensed by the State of California, as authorized in California Building Code (CBC) Section 107.1 and California Residential Code (CRC) R106.1.

In accordance with the provisions of the California Business & Professions Code (BPC), the construction plans, specifications, and calculations for all buildings and structures shall be prepared under the direction of and signed by a person licensed by the State of California as a registered civil engineer, structural engineer, or licensed architect. Structural and soils engineers are civil engineers with the authority to use their respective titles. Any person who practices electrical or mechanical engineering shall be registered accordingly in the State of California.

**Exemptions for Unlicensed Persons** (*BPC Sections 5537, 5538, 6737 & 6745*)

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 where the structural stability of such buildings or structures is not evident. Engineering calculations and the signature of a licensed engineer or architect may be required.

1. Any unlicensed person may prepare plans, drawings or specifications for the following **Residential Work** listed below, providing they have been signed in substantial compliance with the conventional framing requirements for wood framed construction per Title 24 of the CA Code of Regulations or Tables of Limitations for wood frame construction in Chapter 23 of the CBC:
  - a. Single-Family Dwellings not more than two stories plus basement in height.
  - b. Multi-Family Dwellings containing no more than four dwelling units and not more than two stories plus basement in height, limited to a maximum of four dwelling units on any lot.
  - c. Wood frame garages or other structures appurtenant to Items a. and b. above.
  - d. Wood frame agricultural and ranch buildings, unless the building official deems that an undue risk to public health, safety or welfare is involved.
2. Any unlicensed person may prepare plans, drawings or specifications for the following types of **Commercial Interior Additions, Alterations or Tenant Improvements** that do not change or affect structural systems (nonstructural or nonseismic) or safety of the building or its occupants, subject to the approval of the Building Official, in accordance with the provisions of the BPC:
  - a. Tenant spaces that require only one exit per CBC Table 1006.2.1.
  - b. Tenant spaces that are classified only as B and M occupancies.
  - c. Spaces where fire walls, as defined by CBC Section 706, fire barriers, as defined by CBC Section 707, and horizontal exits, as defined by CBC Section 1026, are not required.
  - d. Spaces in a building that are not being converted from residential use and are not subject to change in occupancy to a higher life safety hazard.
  - e. Tenant spaces that are not within historical buildings.
  - f. Tenant spaces that do not require Title 24 energy, mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems designed by appropriately licensed professionals, or appropriately licensed contractors as allowed by the Professional Engineers Act.

**Incomplete Plans:**

The City of Lathrop Building Department requires that plans and specifications must be of sufficient clarity to indicate the nature and extent of the work proposed and show in detail that it will conform to the provisions of the Code and all relevant laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. Plans that are lacking clarity or detail that are deemed incomplete will not be accepted and will be referred back to the Applicant for completion and / or clarification.

**Exemptions for Licensed Contractors** (*BPC Section 6737.3*)

Contractors licensed in the State of California are not prohibited from designing mechanical and electrical systems of facilities for work to be performed by said contractor within the classification for which their license is issued. Nothing in this policy is intended to imply that a licensed contractor may design work that is to be installed by others.



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## Plans Required to be Designed by an Architect / 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:

1. Projects with interior or exterior structural alterations
2. Interior alteration with an occupancy change
3. All Group A (Assembly) Occupancies
4. All Group E (School and Day Care) Occupancies
5. All Group F (Factory and Industrial) Occupancies
6. All Group H (Hazardous) Occupancies
7. All Group I (Industrial) Occupancies
8. Group R-1, R-2 or R-4 Occupancies
9. All Group S (Storage) Occupancies
10. 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
11. Storage racks over 8 feet in height
12. Tanks and vessels
13. Machinery and equipment support and anchorage (exceptions subject to the Building Official)
14. Lateral force resisting systems utilizing poles embedded in the ground
15. 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 & Safety Code (HSC) and the BPC. Please note that electronic signatures are accepted per the California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 411.

<b>Architects:</b>	May design any building of any type except the structural portion of a hospital. (HSC Section 15048 and BPC Sections 5500.1 and 6737)
<b>Landscape Architects:</b>	May not “practice, or offer to practice, architecture or engineering in any of its various recognized branches.” (BPC Section 5615)
<b>Civil Engineers:</b>	May design any building except hospitals and schools. (HSC Section 39148, BPC Sections 5537.5, 6731, 6735 and Education Code Section 39148)
<b>Structural Engineers:</b>	No limitations. May design any building of any type (BPC Sections 6637.1, 6731 and 3736)