



ELEVATED DECK INSPECTION PROGRAM GUIDE

INFORMATIONAL PACKET

QUESTIONS?

Additional information regarding the permit process can be obtained at the Building and Safety Counter at 630 Garden St., call (805) 564-5485, email: CDBuildingCode@SantaBarbaraCA.gov



INTRODUCTION

The City of Santa Barbara's Elevated Deck Inspection Program ensures public safety by providing clear guidance on inspection requirements and offering a streamlined process for necessary repairs and upgrades.

California State Senate Bill 721 (2018) requires local jurisdictions to regulate inspections for multi-family buildings with elevated decks. Further amendments came with Senate Bill 326 (2019), extending inspection standards to condominium associations. These laws ensure the structural integrity of deck-supporting components and establish clear guidelines for inspection procedures.

Buildings with three or more dwelling units must undergo inspections performed by qualified professionals, including California-licensed architects, civil or structural engineers, certified building inspectors, or contractors with specified licenses. These inspections assess supporting elements for signs of deterioration—such as corrosion, fungal decay, or insect infestation—and determine whether such issues compromise structural integrity.

In 2024, California's Governor signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2579 into law, officially extending the deadline for initial elevated deck inspections to **January 1, 2026**.

WHEN IS IT REQUIRED?

A. Building Types. The requirement applies to all residential buildings with 3 or more dwelling units:

- Apartments and condominiums
- Dormitories, fraternities, sororities, convents, and monasteries
- Hotels, motels, and vacation timeshare properties
- Boarding houses and congregate residences (transient with more than 10 occupants and non-transient with more than 16 occupants)
- Assisted living facilities and rehabilitation facilities

B. Exterior Elevated Elements. This requirement applies to all exterior elevated elements (balconies, exterior elevated walkways, elevated decks, exterior stairs and landings, guards and associated handrails) that are:

- Weather-exposed (i.e., not interior)
- Extend beyond exterior walls
- Located more than six feet above adjacent grade
- Wood or steel framed

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

To comply with the requirement, property owners must hire a California-licensed professional to perform the inspection, prepare a report, and fill out a Deck Inspection Certification Form (page 4). The licensed professionals will check that exterior elevated elements are in general safe condition, adequate working order, and do not exhibit signs of deterioration, decay, corrosion, or similar damage that could pose a safety concern and there is no evidence of active water intrusion in concealed spaces of the inspected elements. Follow the steps below for the inspection process to comply with the requirement.

STEP 1: HIRE A LICENSED PROFESSIONAL TO INSPECT

Hire a California-licensed professional to perform an inspection and prepare an inspection report.

NOTE: The inspection must be performed by a licensed architect; licensed civil or structural engineer; a building contractor holding any or all of the “A,” “B,” or “C-5” license classifications issued by the Contractors’ State License Board, with a minimum of five years’ experience, as a holder of the aforementioned classifications or licenses, in constructing multistory wood frame buildings; or an individual certified as a building inspector or building official from a recognized state, national, or international association, as determined by the local jurisdiction. These individuals shall not be employed by the local jurisdiction while performing these inspections.

STEP 2: OWNER RECEIVES REPORT

A copy of the inspection report must be presented to the owner of the building within **45 days** of the completion of the inspection. A report that reveals conditions that pose an immediate hazard to occupants' safety must be delivered to the owner and the City within **15 days** of the inspection.

STEP 3: SUBMIT REPORT AND CERTIFICATION TO THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

The owner or licensed professional must submit a copy of the inspection report and the Deck Inspection Certification Form (page 4) to the City by email: CDBuildingCode@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

STEP 4: INSPECTION RESULTS

- **Immediate Hazards.** Inspections that identify an immediate threat to the safety of the occupants require that the owner of the building perform preventive measures **immediately**. An owner must immediately prevent occupant access to the exterior elevated element until emergency repairs can be completed. A permit application to the City is required to complete the repairs.
- **Corrective Work Needed.** A report that identifies corrective work is necessary requires a permit application to complete the repairs within **120 days** of receipt of the inspection report. Once the permit is approved, the owner has **120 days** to make the repairs unless an extension is granted.
- **No Corrective Work.** The inspection report is not required to be submitted to the City of Santa Barbara if the licensed professional concludes that no emergency repairs or corrective work is required. The inspection report should be kept on file at the property.

STEP 5: SUBMIT FOR A PERMIT

If corrective work is necessary, a permit is required. All building permits are accepted online via our [Accela Citizen Access Portal \(ACA\)](#). More information is available online: [Apply for Permit](#).

WHAT ARE THE DEADLINES?

A. Initial Inspection. All initial inspections must be completed by the deadline of **January 1, 2026**.

B. Reinspection. Reinspection must occur as follows:

- *Apartments.* Reinspection of multi-family properties (not including condominiums) must be completed every six (6) years after the initial inspection. Reports that indicate an emergency condition must be submitted to the Building Official within 15 days.
- *Condominiums.* Reinspection of condominiums shall be completed every nine (9) years after the initial inspection. Reports that indicate an emergency condition must be submitted to the Building Official within 15 days.

DECK INSPECTION CERTIFICATION FORM

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Project Address: _____ Year Built: _____ No. of Units: _____
 Owner's Name: _____ Email: _____

LICENSED PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____ Type (Architect, etc.): _____
 Email: _____ License #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

OBSERVED ELEMENTS AND MATERIALS

BUILDING TYPE	ELEMENTS	MATERIALS
<input type="checkbox"/> Apartment	<input type="checkbox"/> Balconies/Decks	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular sawn lumber
<input type="checkbox"/> Condominium	<input type="checkbox"/> Stairways/Landings	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineered lumber
<input type="checkbox"/> Congregate/Boarding/Dormitory	<input type="checkbox"/> Guardrails/Handrails	<input type="checkbox"/> Pressure treated wood
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel/Motel	<input type="checkbox"/> Walkways/Terraces	<input type="checkbox"/> Naturally durable wood
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Live/Work, Assisted Living Facility, etc.)		<input type="checkbox"/> Steel
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other

The following statements are true to the best of my knowledge (select one):

- ☐ **NO CORRECTIVE WORK.** All elevated wood-framed and steel-framed decks, balconies, landings, stairway systems, walkways, terraces, guardrails, handrails, or any parts thereof in weather-exposed areas did not exhibit signs of deterioration, decay, corrosion or similar damage that could pose a safety concern and there was no evidence of active water intrusion in concealed spaces of the inspected elements.
- ☐ **CORRECTIVE WORK NEEDED.** It was determined that corrective work is required. *Inspection report (with photos included) to be attached to this certification form.* If corrective work is required, apply for a permit within 120 days of completion of your inspection report, respond to plan check comments within 10 days of the date of the correction letter, obtain a building permit within 10 days of notification of plan approval and complete all work within 120 days of permit issuance.

**Licensed Professional's
Stamp**

Signature of Licensed Professional indicated above

Date of Inspection