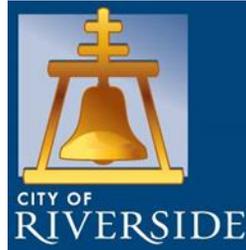


# CITY OF RIVERSIDE



Community & Economic Development Department  
Building & Safety Division

## **BUILDING PLAN CHECK SELF-CERTIFICATION PROGRAM GUIDE**

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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## **A. Program Overview**

The Self-Certification Program delegates responsibilities to certified State-registered architects and professional engineers. These responsibilities include examination of construction documents and certification of compliance with the City of Riverside municipal codes, ordinances, the governing California Building Standards Code, and any other applicable laws (The Code).

To participate in the Self-Certification Program, the design professional must meet all the requirements detailed in Section D. All Projects submitted for the Self-Certification Program must meet the eligibility requirements detailed in Section C. Project submission requirements and procedures are detailed in Section E. All Self-Certified Projects are subject to audit as described in Section F.

The Department reserves the right to suspend operation of the Self-Certification Program as the Building Official deems necessary or appropriate. Nothing in these rules shall be construed to prevent a Self-Certified Professional from submitting a project through the Department's standard plan review process.

## **B. Definitions**

As used in these rules, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

**"Auditor"** means any person designated by the Building Official to grade an audit.

**"Building Official"** means the officer or other designated authority charged with the administration and enforcement of The Code, or a duly authorized representative.

**"The Code"** means the City of Riverside municipal codes, ordinances, the governing California Building Standards Code, and any other applicable laws.

**"Department"** means the city of Riverside Community and Economic Development Department, also referred to as CEDD.

**"Electrical Peer Reviewer"** means a reviewer who is on the city-approved list expressly for the purpose of providing electrical peer reviews for the Self-Certification Program.

**"Owner/Tenant"** for the purposes of Owner/Tenant Certification, means either the actual owner of the building or property, or the tenant who is "acting as an agent of" the owner.

**"Prepared"** or **"prepared by or under the direct supervision of"** means: (a) personally prepared by the Self-Certified Professional submitting the project, or (b) if such Self-Certified Professional is a professional civil or structural engineer, prepared under the

personal supervision and control of such professional civil or structural engineer, or (c) if such Self-Certified Professional is an architect, prepared under the personal supervision and control of such architect.

**"Reviewed by" or "Reviewed and sealed by"** means: (a) the sealed plans were reviewed by the Self-Certified Professional for code compliance, or (b) the plans were drawn by others and were reviewed for code compliance and sealed by the Self-Certified Professional.

**"Self-certification" or "Self-certified"** means the submission to the Department of a signed, personal verification that: (a) is made by the Self-Certified Professional identified in a building permit application; and (b) accompanies plans filed with the Department by such Self-Certified Professional; and (c) attests that such plans do not contain any false information; and (d) attests that such plans are in compliance with the requirements of The Code; and (e) attests that such plans were prepared by, prepared under the direct supervision of, or were reviewed and stamped by the Self-Certified Professional identified in the building permit application.

**"Self-Certified Professional"** means the professional identified as such on a building permit application and accompanying plans.

**"Structural Peer Reviewer"** means a reviewer who is on the city-approved list expressly for the purpose of providing structural peer reviews for the Self-Certification Program.

### C. Eligible Projects

<b>Residential Projects</b>	
<b>Projects Eligible</b>	<b>Projects Not Eligible</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential interior remodels</li> <li>• Residential single-story room additions under 500 SF</li> <li>• Residential detached accessory structures under 1200 SF</li> <li>• Residential patio covers and carports under 1200 SF</li> <li>• Residential detached garage under 1200 SF</li> <li>• Rebuild of single-family dwellings impacted by a natural disaster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New residential construction</li> <li>• Multi-family construction</li> <li>• Projects in FEMA Special Floodplain Hazard Area</li> <li>• Properties located within a historic district that require discretionary review</li> <li>• Projects in geologically hazardous locations, subject to liquefaction, subsidence, expansive soils, etc.</li> <li>• Unpermitted construction</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial Projects</b>	
<b>Projects Eligible</b>	<b>Projects Not Eligible</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial interior tenant improvements less than 5,000 SF that do not involve structural modifications, a change of occupancy or use</li> <li>• Commercial accessory patio cover and shade structures under 1500SF</li> <li>• Commercial non-habitable accessory structures including but not limited to, carports, greenhouses, and equipment sheds under 1500 SF</li> <li>• Freestanding solar PV carport and solar PV systems on existing commercial rooftops with no structural retrofit or battery storage</li> <li>• Site improvements including but not limited to: trash enclosures, lighting, parking restripes, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New commercial construction</li> <li>• Hazardous (H), institutional (I), and large assembly (A) occupancies of 100 or more occupants</li> <li>• High rise buildings (occupied floor more than 75' above Fire Department access)</li> <li>• Projects in FEMA Special Floodplain Hazard Area</li> <li>• Properties located within a historic district that require discretionary review</li> <li>• Projects in geologically hazardous locations, subject to liquefaction, subsidence, expansive soils, etc.</li> <li>• Unpermitted construction</li> </ul>

## **D. Requirements for Self-Certified Professional**

### **Eligible Professionals**

Professional architects or professional civil or structural engineers who have been responsible for ensuring code compliance for a minimum of five (5) years may be eligible for participating in the Self-Certification Program for eligible building projects. During that time, the professional must have been:

1. Registered in the State of California, and
2. Responsible for compliance with the California Building Standards Code, and
3. Certified to seal project drawings

### **Insurance Requirements**

For each project, the Self-Certified Professional is required to furnish to the Department a certificate of professional liability errors and omissions insurance, issued by an insurer authorized to perform business in California, with limits of not less than \$500,000 per claim and \$1,000,000 in the aggregate for all claims made during the policy period.

### **Professional of Record Statement**

For each project, the Self-Certified Professional is required to submit a Self-Certification Professional of Record Statement in which the Self-Certified Professional shall be required to certify to the city and to the person hiring or otherwise retaining the Self-Certified Professional for such project that:

- a. The Self-Certified Professional has been a professional registered engineer or architect for at least three (5) years and is registered in the State of California; and
- b. Within the preceding five-year period, the Self-Certified Professional has not been convicted or found liable of: (1) knowingly making a false statement of material fact on or in connection with any building permit application, or (2) knowingly submitting in support of a building permit application any document containing false or fraudulent information, or (3) knowingly affixing a false signature to any building permit application; and
- c. The attached application and every page of the accompanying plan(s) stamped by the Self-Certified Professional: (1) were prepared by, under the direct supervision of, or reviewed by such Professional; (2) are complete; and (3) are, as of the date of submission, in accordance with the requirements of The Code; and

- d. The attached application and all technical submissions made by the Self-Certified Professional in connection with the self-certified project were prepared in accordance with and meet the "standard of care" required of the profession; and
- e. All information and assertions made by the Self-Certified Professional in the permit application and documents submitted in support of such permit application are true and correct; and
- f. If the Self-Certified Professional becomes aware of any false or inaccurate statement in the permit application, accompanying plans or any document submitted in support of such permit application, regardless of whether such false or inaccurate statement was made by such Self-Certified Professional or by his agent or employee, the Self-Certified Professional will immediately take all measures necessary to correct such false or inaccurate statement; and
- g. The Self-Certified Professional understands that the Building Official will rely upon the truth and accuracy of the certifications contained in the Professional of Record Self-Certification Statement as the basis for issuing a permit under the Self-Certification Permit Program; and
- h. The Self-Certified Professional understands that the self-certified project identified in the building permit application is being approved for a building permit subject to audit and/or field inspection by the Department and the permit is subject to revocation by the Building Official if necessary or appropriate to protect the public health, safety or welfare; and
- i. If the Department determines that the submitted plans do not conform to the requirements of The Code, the Self-Certified Professional agrees to submit a revision to permit to the Department in a timely manner and to take all remedial measures within such professional of record's control to bring the submitted plans and any construction there under into conformity with the requirements of The Code; and
- j. The Self-Certified Professional understands that the failure to submit any required plan revision to the Department in a timely manner will result in automatic suspension of their self-certification privileges under the Self-Certification Permit Program, until such time that a plan revision is submitted to the Department and/or the matter is resolved by the Department; and
- k. The Self-Certified Professional understands that failure to take all remedial measures within their control to bring the submitted plans and any construction thereunder into compliance with The Code shall result in revocation of the Self-Certified Professional's privileges under the Self-Certification Program and may result in notification of such fact to the California Board of Professional Engineers or the California Architects Board.

Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prohibit the Building Official from requiring additional certifications in the Professional of Record Self-Certification Statement.

### **Owner/Tenant Statement**

For each project, the Self-Certified Professional is required to submit to the Department, on a form prepared by the Department, an Self-Certification Owner/Tenant Statement, which shall be signed and dated by the Owner or Tenant responsible for the work identified in the building permit application and in which such owner or tenant shall certify to the city that such Owner or Tenant:

- a. Authorized the work of all professionals and consultants named in the building permit application and accompanying plans; and
- b. Agrees to take all measures necessary to correct any misrepresentation or falsification of facts made knowingly or negligently in the building permit application or in any document submitted in support of such application by the owner or tenant, as applicable, or by such owner's or tenant's agents, contractors or employees; and
- c. Understands that the Self-Certified project is being approved for a building permit subject to audit and/or field inspection by the Department; and
- d. Agrees to take all remedial measures necessary to bring the plans and all construction completed under the permit for the project into conformity with requirements of The Code.

Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prohibit the Building Official from requiring additional certifications in the Owner/Tenant Certification Statement.

### **Indemnification Letter**

For each project, the Self-Certified Professional is required to submit to the Department, on a form provided by the Department, an Owner Indemnification Letter, which shall be signed and dated by the owner responsible for the work identified in the permit application and in which such owner shall agree to the following:

- a. To protect, defend, indemnify and hold harmless the City of Riverside and its officers, representatives, managers and employees against any and all claims, liabilities, judgments, costs, expenses, delays, demands or injuries arising out of or in any way connected with the design, construction, code compliance review or issuance of a building permit for the project identified in the building permit application; and
- b. That if construction is contrary to The Code, or to any permit issued under the Self-Certification Program, the owner, as applicable, shall, without undue delay, remove or modify, at such owner's own expense, any component of such construction that does not conform to the requirements of The Code, or to such permit.

Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prohibit the Building Official from requiring additional agreements in the Indemnification Letter.

### **Required Third Party Certification**

To show competency in the California Building Standards Code, the architect or engineer participating in the Self-Certification Program must successfully maintain the Plans Examiner certification administered by the International Code Council (ICC), demonstrating knowledge in the application of the California Building Standards Code, or have other demonstrated means acceptable to the Building Official.

### **E. Project Submission Procedures**

The Self-Certification Program submission process flowchart and submittal checklist is available online at <https://riversideca.gov/cedd/building-safety>.

Once all the applicable pre-approvals and documents listed on the *Self-Certification Submittal Checklist* have been obtained, the Self-Certified Professional shall submit plans through the POSSE LMS system. All completed applications, forms, letters and other documents listed on the *Self-Certification Submittal Checklist*, as applicable or otherwise required by the Department for the project, shall be uploaded with the plans.

A cover sheet shall be attached to each set of plans. Each required cover sheet shall:

- a. Be signed and stamped by the Self-Certified Professional responsible for preparing the plans; and
- b. Contain an index of drawings as required by law; and
- c. Contain a Self-Certification Notice with the following language: *"This project has been permitted under the City of Riverside Self-Certification Program. The project is subject to audit and field inspection. If the construction of the project is contrary to or does not meet the standard of the City of Riverside municipal codes, ordinances, the California Building Standards Code, and any other applicable law, the owner, at his/her own expense, shall remove or modify all components that do not conform. Any deviations from the approved plan must be coordinated in advance with the city inspector and revised plans or sketches must be provided by the self-certified professional."*
- d. Contain the following certification statement on the cover sheet: *"I hereby certify that these drawings are prepared by me, under my supervision, or reviewed by me and to the best of my professional knowledge conform to City of Riverside municipal codes, ordinances, the California Building Standards Code, and any other applicable law."* Such a certification statement shall be signed by the professional of record who prepared the plans and clearly show his/her name.

The Department will review the project to:

- a. Verify that all applicable applications, forms, letters and other documents listed on the Department's relevant *Self-Certification Submittal Checklists*, or otherwise required by the Department, have been submitted and completed in full by the appropriate parties.
- b. Verify that the project is eligible for the Self-Certification Program.
- c. Verify that all necessary pre-approvals have been obtained.
- d. Screen plans and documents to ensure complete submittal and necessary items have been provided.

If the Department determines that the plans submitted by the Self-Certified Professional require minor corrections, the Self-Certified Professional will be given the opportunity to make the necessary changes and submit revised/additional sheets and/or documentation.

After a project is accepted for submittal to the Self-Certification Program, the Department will notify the Self-Certified Professional to collect any fees and forms prior to the issuance of the building permit.

#### **F. Auditing Procedures**

All self-certified plans are subject to audit by the Department to verify compliance with the requirements of The Code. Audits may be conducted before or after the self-certification permit is issued.

##### **Audit Process**

Self-Certification Projects are subject to random audits at a rate of at least 10% of the submitted projects. In addition to the random audits, projects may be audited if:

- a. The project field inspector finds that the plans permitted under the Self-Certification permit program are not in compliance with The Code.
- b. In any given month, a Self-Certified Professional has had four or more projects accepted for Self-Certification by the department and none of those projects has been audited by the department.
- c. Within the preceding 12 months, no project submitted by a Self-Certified Professional has been audited by the department.
- d. A Self-Certified Professional has failed any audit within three years.

When code violations are identified during the audit, the owner and applicant will be notified in writing via email. The notification will direct the Self-Certified Professional to address all code violations found in the audit. If an audit is conducted after the permit has been issued,

inspections may be suspended until the corrected plan is made available at the construction site.

If the Self-Certified Professional of an audited project disputes the results of the audit or disputes the accuracy or applicability of any code correction comment entered in connection with such audit, the Self-Certified architect or engineer has the right to request a meeting to review the matter with the Building Official.

### **Review Criteria**

Each self-certified project selected for an audit will be audited for compliance with The Code. The auditor for each discipline will complete the review in accordance with the scoring system described below.

### **Scoring (Evaluation) System**

1. For each plan review discipline, group all building code violations by subject matter to eliminate repetitive comments addressing the same issue.
2. For each plan review discipline, assign a point value of "1" to each subject-matter group into which the plan review corrections have been categorized.
3. For each plan review discipline:
  - a. Tally the points assigned to each group of categorized plan review corrections to determine the numeric auditing grade for that discipline.
  - b. If the total sum exceeds the cap based on the table below, limit the total to the capped value.
4. After determining the total sum for each discipline, add all final sums to calculate the audited project's final cumulative auditing grade.
5. If the final cumulative audit grade is fifteen (15) points or more, such project shall be deemed to have failed the audit.
- 6.

<b>Plan Review Discipline</b>	<b>Applicable Cap on Points</b>
Architectural	No limit on points
Structural	No limit on points
Electrical	8
Energy	3
Accessibility	3
Plumbing	5
Mechanical	5

## **Notification to Self-Certified Professional**

The Department shall notify the Self-Certified Professional in writing of the results of any audit conducted under these rules.

1. Notify the Self-Certified Professional and Owner of Record in writing; and
2. State, for each plan review discipline auditing the project, the applicable final numeric audit grade for such discipline and whether the audit has passed or failed.
3. Provide an explanation of the Self-Certified Professional's appeal options.
4. State that if an appeal application has not been submitted timely or if the Self-Certified Professional fails to appear at a timely requested plan review meeting or an appeal hearing, the Self-Certified Professional shall be deemed to have waived his or her right to dispute the results of the audit.
5. Notify the Self-Certified Professional that all violations must be corrected by following the directions for follow-up contained in the notification.
6. State the date by which the corrections must be resolved.
7. Notify the Self-Certified Professional that if the corrections identified in the correction comments have not been corrected or resolved by the date indicated on the notification, the Building Official may, without further notice, suspend the Self-Certified Professional's Self Certification privileges until such time that such violations are corrected or resolved.
8. Notify the Self-Certified Professional that if it is determined that the building code and/or city ordinance violation(s) identified in the plan review comments pose a threat to the public health, safety or welfare, the permit may be revoked.

## **Appeal Process**

If the Self-Certified Professional of an audited project disputes the results of the audit or disputes the accuracy or applicability of any correction, the Self-Certified Professional of record has the right to call the auditor to discuss and/or:

1. **Plan Review Meeting:** Request an informal meeting within seven (7) calendar days from audit completion/decision to review the matter with the auditor and/or auditor(s). The Self-Certified Professional will indicate in writing which comments (s)he is appealing and provide justification at least three business days prior to the meeting.
2. **Administrative Review:** If the Self-Certified Professional disputes the results of the auditor(s), request an administrative review from the Building Official within three (3) business days from plan review meeting completion/decision. Fees may be charged

based on the time spent reviewing the request and conducting any in-person meetings.

3. The Building Official shall maintain a policy for the appeals process in accordance with the California Building Standards Code and Riverside Municipal Code.

## **G. Revisions**

### **Voluntary Field Changes and Revisions**

The Self-Certified Professional must inform the project inspector of any proposed field changes or revisions. The inspector will determine if the proposed changes are minor and can be processed in the field or require revised plans.

If the changes require revised plans, the revisions must be processed through the POSSE LMS online portal for record keeping. Changes or revisions which add to the scope of work included in the original plan submittal shall be treated as new work requiring a supplemental permit.

### **Mandatory Field Changes and Revisions**

When an inspector determines that the plans contain code violations or are missing critical information, the inspector will inform the Contractor in writing and shall notify the Building Official. A revised plan by the Self-Certified Professional must be processed through the POSSE LMS online portal for record keeping.

## **H. Deferred Submittals**

The self-certified professional shall clearly indicate on the cover sheet all items to be deferred. Each deferred submittal must bear the shop drawing stamp of the professional engineer and architect of record and be processed through the POSSE LMS online portal for record keeping.

## **I. Suspension and Revocation of Self-Certification Privileges**

As described in Section F, the failure of the Self-Certified Professional to submit required corrections identified in any audit by the specified date may result in revocation of the Self-Certified Professional's privileges. Privileges shall also be revoked by the Building Official if the Self-Certified Professional fails three (3) audits within a three-year period; or fails to take all remedial measures within such Self-Certified Professional's control to bring the required plans and any construction thereunder into compliance with The Code.

Unless the Self-Certified Professional can show cause for the Building Official not to revoke their privileges, they shall be revoked for a period of one year.

A Self-Certified Professional's self-certification privileges shall be permanently revoked by the Department, if such Self-Certified Professional is convicted or found liable of: (1) knowingly making a false statement of material fact on or in connection with any building permit application, or (2) knowingly submitting in support of a building permit application any document containing false or fraudulent information, or (3) knowingly affixing a false signature to any building permit application.

The Building Official may revoke any permit issued under the Self-Certification Program if an audit or inspection indicates that the permitted project or any portion thereof poses a immediate threat to the public health, safety or welfare.

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