



This checklist provides the building permit application submittal requirements for new homes, additions, and remodels with structural changes.

A. General Information

An unlicensed person may prepare plans for one- and two-story, wood framed single-family dwellings and accessory buildings in conformance with conventional construction provisions (CRC R301, CBC 2308). If, however, any portion of a structure deviates from conventional framing, the Building Official may require that the plans, drawings, specifications and/or calculations for that portion be prepared by or under the direct supervision of a registered engineer or architect who must stamp and sign the relevant sheets. Grading plans must be prepared by a licensed engineer or architect.

Applications are required to be submitted electronically through the ePlan Review [portal](#). For ePlan help, see the ePlan User Guide & ePlan Video Series located under “Info & Help,” contact staff by [email](#), or schedule an appointment with staff using the [Appointment Scheduler](#). The ePlan Submittal Checklist-[PLG-230](#) details the content and format of your application files.

B. Pre-Application Clearances

Submit the following, as applicable, with your building permit application:

Water (for new dwellings)

1. Letter from a public water source, declaring intent to serve (i.e., a “Will Serve” letter).
2. If public water service is not available, apply for an Individual Water System Permit. Review Environmental Health’s [website](#).

Sewage Disposal

3. For projects on a parcel served by a septic system, submit an approved [Environmental Health Building Clearance](#) form.
4. For a new dwelling with sewer service provided by the City of Watsonville, City of Santa Cruz, Salsipuedes Sanitary District, San Lorenzo Valley Water District, Bear Creek Estates Wastewater System, or Big Basin Water Company, provide a letter from the agency certifying its ability to provide sewer service.
5. If your parcel is served by sewer and is within a [County Sanitation District or CSA](#) and your project increases the square footage or number of drainage fixture units connected to the sewer system, a [Sewer Lateral Video Inspection](#) or clearance document is required. All defects identified in the video inspection shall be shown on the building permit plans submittal as repair requirements.

Demolition Projects

5. An over-the-counter sewer abandonment permit is required prior to demolition of existing structure(s). See Public Works’ Building Permit Guidance [webpage](#).
6. Demolition of a residential structure requires a Special Inspection to determine moveability. For more information, see [here](#).

ADU Gas & Electric Utility Advisory: It is recommended that applicants confirm required services and meters with PG&E. HCD and Santa Cruz County do not have authority over issues related to gas and electrical services. Gov. Code 66324 (d)&(e); 2025 HCD ADU Handbook page 43

C. Supplemental Documents (as applicable)

The first document in your Supplemental Documents file must be the Supplemental Documents Index-[PLG-235](#). List each of your supplemental documents on the index.

The following are typical supplemental documents. Please contact staff if you are unsure which supplemental documents are required.

1. Soils report or waiver (for information about both, please visit this [webpage](#))
2. Other technical reports (e.g., arborist, FEMA documentation). Note: [geology](#) and biotic reports are submitted as separate applications.
3. Structural engineering calculations – Check [here](#) to see if your project requires engineering.
4. WELO (Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance) information – Check [here](#) for applicability. WELO exemption form available [here](#).
5. Modification Worksheet for nonconforming structures and uses, as well as for existing structures located within riparian corridors and geological hazard areas. Check [here](#) for additional information.
6. Manufacturer’s specification sheet(s) with ICC, IAPMO, UL or other approved listing agency (e.g. mechanical, plumbing, electrical and structural assemblies such as heating and cooling systems, water heaters and boilers, energy storage, shear wall assemblies, etc.)
7. Appendix A – Project Information and Threshold Determination Form. See Public Works’ Building Permit Guidance [webpage](#).



D. Project Plans

The following is the information that should be included in each type of plan. This checklist is for a typical residential project. Your project may require additional information. If you have questions, please schedule an in-person or phone [appointment](#) or [email](#) staff. **Project plans must be a minimum size of 18 x 24 inches. No red ink is allowed. Plans for additions or remodels must use standard architectural design conventions, see [here](#).**

☐ COVER SHEET

1. Project address, Assessor's Parcel Number, project name, and detailed vicinity map
2. Name and contact information of owner, architect/designer, engineer(s), contractor (include license number)
3. Complete scope of work identifying all work proposed under this application
4. List existing and proposed square footage of the project, including floor area, decks, retaining walls, and porches
5. Occupancy Groups Classification (e.g., R3 and U) and Type of Construction (e.g., Type VB)
6. List of current applicable codes including code cycle (e.g., CBC, CRC, CEC, CMC, CPC, Calif. Energy Code and Calif. Green Building Code) and Santa Cruz County Code Amendments, see [here](#)
7. List of deferred submittals (e.g., trusses, solar PV, fire sprinklers, etc.) limited to Building Official approval.
8. List required HERS (Home Energy Rating System) testing items.
9. Wildland Urban Interface: Indicate if the proposed structure is in the State Responsibility Area (SRA), fire zone, and degree of hazard assigned by the State Fire Marshall's Office. Information on the WUI is available [here](#).
10. Index of Sheets
11. Abbreviations & Symbols (add to other sheets, as applicable)
12. Zoning site standards & parking summary, including:
 - a. Setbacks: [standard](#), [ADU](#), & [accessory structures and garages](#) (as applicable)
 - b. [Lot Coverage](#) calculations
 - c. [Floor Area Ratio](#) calculations
 - d. Maximum existing and proposed [height: standard](#), [ADU](#), [accessory structures](#) (as applicable)
 - e. Parking compliance (number of spaces, space dimensions, surfacing)

☐ SITE PLAN

13. Scale: 1"=10', 1"=20', or other standard scale and North Arrow
14. Entire property boundaries and parcel size
15. Existing site topographic contours in the development area, existing streams, and drainage courses
16. Existing and proposed easements and/or infrastructure, including vehicular, drainage and sewer easements within or adjacent to the parcel.
17. Driveway location(s) and location of off-street parking spaces. Provide surface material(s). Parking numbers, dimensions, surfaces, etc. must comply with parking requirements.
18. Location of and setbacks from: property lines, rights-of-way, easements, and distances between all structures.
19. Emergency vehicle turnaround, if required (contact your local Fire Protection Agency for information)
20. All existing structures & improvements, including all impervious areas (identified and labeled as permitted OR to-be recognized)
21. Structures & improvements to be demolished, including all impervious areas
22. Proposed structures & improvements, including all impervious (e.g., paved driveways and patios) and all semi-pervious (e.g., pavers, decks) areas
23. If site is served by an onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) such as a septic system, show system location including septic tank, leachfield, and expansion area.
24. If property is served by sewer, provide layouts and details of existing and proposed building sewers. Information shall include: location, diameter, material and slope of sewer pipes; locations of exterior cleanouts, connections, backflow devices, pumps; and location of any repairs as required by video inspection review. A sewer lateral shall not pass under any other structures up to its connection to the Sanitation District sewer main.
25. Location of lateral for fire protection
26. Domestic water and gas supply locations and pipe sizes
27. Location, height, and length of retaining walls and fences. Indicate if fences and/or walls are existing (E) or new (N).

☐ STORMWATER / EROSION CONTROL – Additional stormwater requirements may apply, see DPW requirements [here](#)

28. Scale 1" = 1', 1" = 20', 1/16" = 1' or other standard scale and North Arrow
29. Existing and proposed drainage features, e.g., curbs, swales, rain gutters, splash blocks, inlets, pipe systems, streams etc.
30. Topography with arrows showing runoff pathways
31. Offsite pathways and destination of runoff



32. If site is served by onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) such as a septic system, show its location and setbacks to stormwater improvements.
33. Proposed erosion control measures including sediment containment measures. Grading between October 15 and April 15 requires a [winter grading](#) approval.
34. Stormwater Management Plan demonstrating how the project has been designed to minimize impervious area coverage and what mitigation measures are proposed to maintain natural/undeveloped drainage patterns, stormwater runoff rates, volumes, and pollutant loads from the project site as well as demonstrating how safe overflow is accommodated with the project design
35. A site assessment performed by the project engineer, architect, or designer that notes whether there are any existing stormwater (drainage) issues on or near the site and if any stormwater (drainage) issues or impacts are anticipated resulting from the proposed project
36. Revegetation proposed for all exposed soils surfaces including cut and fill slopes

☐ **GRADING PLAN** – When is a grading plan [required](#)?

37. All requirements of the Site Plan (see above)
38. Surveyed existing topographic contours (2' intervals)
39. Proposed contours
40. Grading (cut/fill) volumes in cubic yards
41. Limits of grading/disturbance
42. Location of OWTS (such as a septic system), including septic tanks, leachfield, and expansion area. (No grading is allowed over septic system or future expansion area.)
43. Cut/fill keying and benching requirements
44. Compaction requirements for fills
45. Driveway profile with proposed grades noted

☐ **ELEVATIONS**

46. Scale $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'$ or $\frac{1}{8}" = 1'$ and North Arrow
47. Existing elevations labeled with direction, e.g., north, south, east, west
48. Proposed elevations labeled with direction, e.g., north, south, east, west
49. Natural grade
50. Finish grade
51. Height of structure on all elevations. The County has a specific way of [measuring height](#).

☐ **FLOOR PLANS**

52. Scale $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'$ and North Arrow
53. Existing floor plan, including attached exterior improvements (e.g., deck, stairs, balconies)
54. Proposed floor plan, including attached exterior improvements (e.g., deck, stairs, balconies)
55. Provide dimensions and arrangement of all rooms and partitions, and label rooms per SCCC [13.10.700-B \(Bedroom\)](#) on existing and proposed plans
56. Electrical plan (may be on a separate sheet) including location and amperage of service entrance, subpanels, locations of appliances, lights, fixtures, outlets, switches, and smoke detectors. The plan must correspond to the requirements in the energy compliance forms.
57. Location of existing and proposed plumbing fixtures and water heaters, including size, type, and location
58. Window and door schedules showing size, material, operation, and special features (e.g., egress or safety glazing). Note: Santa Cruz County Code 12.10.215(J) requires a minimum 30-inch net clear opening for all new or reframed doorways, excluding shower doors or doors serving closets that are less than 36" deep. Plans shall specify minimum 2'8" hinged or 2'6" pocket doors.
59. Location, size, and type of space heating systems
60. Location of shear walls and other lateral bracing. Cross reference to shear wall schedule and/or details

☐ **ENERGY COMPLIANCE**

61. An approved energy compliance method showing compliance with the California Energy Code. Plans shall include requirements in the energy compliance forms. Energy documents shall be reprinted on plan sheets.
62. Signatures of the energy compliance author and the designer shall be on all copies of the CF1R forms, registered through a HERS registry (unless exempt)



☐ **MODIFICATION PLAN** –For projects involving alterations to [non-conforming structures & uses](#) & for projects located within a riparian corridor or geological hazard area (See “Additional Information” below)

63. Use [standard architectural design conventions](#) to depict existing, modified, and demolished structural components (roof framing, exterior wall framing, floor framing, and foundation). See [Modification Evaluation](#) webpage for additional information.

☐ **SPECIAL INSPECTION – [PLG-240 FORM](#)**

64. Embed the Special Inspection Form PLG-240 into the plan sheets when identified by the Registered Design Professional. Include signatures from all parties (design professionals, property owner, & contractor).

☐ **FOUNDATION, FIRST FLOOR FRAMING**

- 65. Scale $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'$ and North Arrow
- 66. Layout of foundation wall and concrete slabs with dimensions
- 67. Size and location of footings, piers, posts, beams, air vents, access holes, integral footings, and structural reinforcement.
- 68. Species, grade, size, direction, and spacing of floor joists and/or beams
- 69. Hold-down locations and types according to requirements developed in structural calculations
- 70. For additions, adequate structural ties between existing and new foundation
- 71. For second-story additions, demonstrate existing foundation is suitable to support additional loading
- 72. Anchor bolt size and spacings
- 73. Underfloor access, size and location
- 74. Cross-reference to details and connection specifications

☐ **SECOND FLOOR FRAMING PLAN**

- 75. Scale $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'$ and North Arrow
- 76. Material, size, spacing, species, and grade of all wood members
- 77. Attic access, size and location

☐ **CEILING FRAMING PLAN**

- 78. Scale $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'$ and North Arrow
- 79. Materials, size, spacing, species, and grade of all wood members
- 80. Attic access, size and location
- 81. Cross-reference to details and connection specification

☐ **ROOF FRAMING PLAN**

- 82. Scale $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'$ and North Arrow
- 83. Material, size, spacing, species, and grade of all wood members
- 84. Cross-reference to details and connection specifications

☐ **STRUCTURAL CROSS-SECTION** – Separate drawing are required for each major framing type

- 85. Scale $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'$ and North Arrow
- 86. Show original natural grade inside and outside building footprint
- 87. Footing, foundation, and finish grade in relation to framing
- 88. Crawl space clearance, ceiling, and attic height
- 89. All floor, decks, wall, ceiling, roof framing, blocking, and lateral bracing with size and spacing of members
- 90. Finishes for floor, walls, and ceilings
- 91. Roofing (Class A for properties located in the Wildland Urban Interface areas is required), roof sheathing, and attachment specifications
- 92. Exterior wall materials and attachment specifications
- 93. Insulation R-values
- 94. Upper and lower ventilation for all ceilings and attic areas
- 95. For additions, show adequate structural ties between existing and new construction

☐ **DETAILS**

- 96. Scale $\frac{1}{2}" = 1'$ or $1" = 1'$
- 97. Footings, piers, grade beams
- 98. Connections of framing members—include metal connector types and sizes



Application Requirements for Residential Structures

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| 99. High strength connections, including supporting engineering specifications |
| 100. Nailing schedule for shear walls |
| 101. Stairs, handrails, and guardrails: rise and run of stairs, height of handrail and guardrails with spacing of members in guardrails) |
| 102. Spas: show dedicated outlet or disconnect and locking cover or pool barrier |
| 103. Shear transfer details: blocking and nailing at horizontal-to-vertical diaphragm connections |
| 104. Shear collector details at opening and reentrant corners according to requirements developed in structural calculations |
| 105. Shear wall layout plan locating the seismic tie-down devices, the size and spacing of anchor bolts, and the sheathing size and nailing pattern |
| 106. For two or more units with a common wall or floor/ceiling: fire and sound resistive construction assemblies between units |

☐ **FIRE PROTECTION / WATER STORAGE TANKS**

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| 107. Identify water source |
| 108. Distance of existing and proposed tank(s) to property lines, rights-of-way, and other structures (water tanks are required to meet setbacks unless eligible for an exception. |
| 109. Slope and grade adjacent to tank |
| 110. Foundation designs for tanks greater than 5,000 gallons or with greater than 2:1 width to height ratio |
| 111. Location of required fire hydrants within 250 feet of property line |
| 112. Sprinkler system plans and calculations shall be submitted directly to the local Fire District for new single-family dwellings and additions over 50% of the original square footage of the single-family dwellings, as well as fire alarm specifications, if proposed. |
| 113. Fire Protection: Identify and detail fire resistive construction at exterior walls when required based on fire separation distance to other structures or property lines. |

☐ **PROJECTS WITH A DISCRETIONARY PERMIT**

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| 114. Provide a copy of the approved Discretionary Permit Conditions of Approval as a plan sheet. |
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☐ **MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE (3 OR MORE UNITS)**

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| 115. Detail both fire and sound separation requirements between dwelling units. California Building Code. |
| 116. Accessibility for privately funded projects: Provide details which verify compliance with California Building Code Chapter 11A. |
| 117. Accessibility for publicly funded projects: Provide details which verify compliance with California Building Code Chapter 11B. Note that public funding includes both financial and other contributions that are public resources such as land. |

E. Additional Information

The following provides additional explanation of terms or references used in the checklist.

Standard architectural design conventions

For additions and remodels, clearly distinguish between new and existing construction on site plans, elevations, floor plans, foundation plans, details, and framing plans. Provide a wall legend as follows:

	Existing
	New
	To Be Removed
	Altered

1. Exclude extraneous shading, furniture placement, textures, etc., that are not necessary for plan review, except when required as a condition of approval of an associated discretionary application.
2. Red ink is not allowed.
3. Files containing layers are not allowed.



When is engineering required?

Engineering is required if the project includes any of the following:

1. Retaining walls which retain more than 4 feet of material or have a surcharge from other structures or driveways/roadways
2. Load-bearing beams, including glu-lams
3. Large or high strength timber connections
4. Non-standard foundations, including pier and grade beams
5. Trusses -provide engineered details and layout plans from the manufacturer for prefabricated trusses. County Code 12.10.325 (b): architect or engineer of record will provide a letter stating trusses conform to the building structure
6. Construction other than conventional, wood framing, per CBC or CRC
7. A structure with one or more plan or vertical irregularities, as defined in ASCE
8. Swimming pools
9. Grading more than 2,000 cubic yards-- Information about grading permit thresholds and plan requirements is available [here](#).
10. Bridges
11. Water storage tanks over 5,000 gallons (to include foundation and anchorage to foundation)
12. New, Repair, or replacement of decks over 12ft high
13. Contour mapping when required per building height handout
14. Creation/addition/or replacement of more than 5,000 square feet of impervious OR semi-impervious surfacing
15. Proposing extensions to sanitary sewer mains
16. Extensions of a public sewer main

If your project requires calculations, note that stamps and signatures of California licensed architects and engineers must be embedded using images or other methods. Restrictions imposed by digital signatures are not allowed. The engineer must sign the first page of each set of the calculations and all drawings directly related to the structural calculations.

When is a grading plan required?

Additional information about grading permit thresholds and plan requirements is available [here](#).

Grading Type	Grading Plan Required
Excavation - "cut"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volume greater than 100 cubic yards• Height greater than 5 feet
Import - "fill"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volume greater than 100 cubic yards• Depth greater than 2 feet• Placed on slopes greater than 20% (5:1)• Supports a structure• Obstructs/alters a drainage course

When is WELO documentation required?

The Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance is a requirement of the State which has been incorporated into the County Code as Chapter [13.13](#). Additional information regarding the WELO is available [here](#).

1. The following projects are EXEMPT and require NO compliance with WELO

- Projects located within the Soquel Creek Water District and Santa Cruz Water District
- Residential remodels, excluding the reconstruction of a dwelling which is subject to the WELO
- Attached residential additions
- ADUs

2. If NOT exempt, the following types of landscapes are exempt by landscape type. A [Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Exemption Form and Checklist](#) is required to be submitted with the building permit application as a supplemental document.

- Residential landscape of 500 square feet or less
- Landscape irrigated by hand or low volume irrigation for an establishment period of 2-5 years, after which irrigation is removed



Application Requirements for Residential Structures

- Landscaping installed solely for stormwater treatment
- Landscaping irrigated entirely by graywater, captured rainwater, or recycled water
- Areas solely dedicated to edible plants within family or community gardens
- Ecological restoration projects
- Agricultural crops or feedlots
- Registered historical sites with a period landscape style
- Paddocks and pastures
- Plants cultivated for scientific research or public exhibit in botanical institutions

3. If NOT exempt, project may be eligible to use the [Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Exemption Form and Checklist](#).

Eligible projects are:

- Residential projects involving no more than two dwelling units (not counting ADUs) regardless of size or number of parcels. Eligible projects include SFDs, habitable and non-habitable accessory structures and residential swimming pools, etc.
- Any landscape where at least 30 percent of the estimated total water use is provided by graywater, captured rainwater or recycled water.

4. If NOT exempt or checklist-eligible, then a [WELO-compliant landscape plan](#) is required. Subject projects include, but aren't limited to:

- Commercial / industrial / institutional additions or remodels with new or refurbished landscapes of any size;
- new or refurbished parking lots with landscapes of any size; and
- non-residential swimming pools and associated landscapes of any size.

When are a Modification Worksheet and Modification Plan Required?

A Modification Worksheet and Plan are required structures or uses that are nonconforming and for additions or modifications to structures located within a riparian corridor or in a geologically hazardous area. Review the Modification Worksheet overview [here](#).

- If you need help determining if your structure or use is nonconforming, contact Zoning staff by [email](#) or by making appointment using the [Appointment Scheduler](#).
- If you need help determining if your structure is located in a riparian corridor or geologically hazardous area, contact Environmental Planning staff by [email](#) or by making appointment using the [Appointment Scheduler](#).