
DESIGN PROFESSIONAL STAMP (SEAL) AND SIGNATURE ON DOCUMENTS

Disciplines: Structural

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Division of the State Architect (DSA) documents referenced within this publication are available on the [DSA Forms](#) or [DSA Publications](#) webpages.

PURPOSE

This Interpretation of Regulations (IR) clarifies stamping (sealing) and signing requirements of design professionals preparing documents, including construction documents, for projects under DSA jurisdiction.

SCOPE

This IR is applicable to all projects submitted to DSA. It pertains to general requirements of the responsible design professionals to stamp (seal) and sign the documents for which they are responsible. Unless noted otherwise, these general requirements apply to both the design professional in general responsible charge (DPGRC) and other design professionals delegated responsibility for a portion of the design.

This IR does not detail the requirements of the DPGRC when using construction documents prepared by other design professionals. Refer to *IR A-18: Use of Construction Documents Prepared by Other Design Professionals* for those details. See the Glossary section of IR A-18 for definitions of some terms used in this IR.

BACKGROUND

California Administrative Code (CAC) Section 4-316(a) requires a primary design professional, referred to in this IR as the DPGRC, have overall responsibility for each project under DSA jurisdiction. With few exceptions, the DPGRC must be an architect or structural engineer licensed in California. The DPGRC is listed on line 23 of the form *DSA 1: Application for Approval of Plans and Specifications*.

CAC Sections 4-316(b) and 4-317(g) also permit the DPGRC to delegate portions of the design to other licensed and appropriately qualified design professionals. In accordance with CAC Sections 4-316(c) and 4-317(h), the stamp (seal) and signature of a design professional on drawings (plans), specifications, and other documents is deemed evidence that full responsibility is assumed by the signatory for the work shown.

1. GENERAL

The DPGRC and other design professionals delegated responsibility for portions of the project must be licensed or registered by the state of California. They shall provide their stamp (seal) with license or registration number and signature on the drawings (plans), specifications, calculations, reports, and other instruments of service in accordance with Business and Professions Code (BPC) Sections 5536.1 and 6735 and CAC Section 3-317(h).

1.1 Electronic Signatures

For drawings (plans) and specifications submitted to DSA, stamps (seals) and signatures may be applied as an electronic scan on the final construction documents per Section 2 below.

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1.2 License Expiration

In accordance with BPC Section 5536.1, documents stamped (sealed) and signed by an architect, must include the expiration date of the architect's license.

BPC Sections 6735, 6735.3, and 6735.4 no longer require professional engineers to include the expiration date of their license when stamping (sealing) and signing documents, nor is the expiration date required to be included in the stamp (seal) itself. Professional engineers may elect to include the expiration date; however, doing so is not a statutory requirement.

1.3 Structural Calculations and Reports

Stamp (seal), signature, date of signing, and license number shall be shown on the cover sheet of the structural calculations and reports when such documents are submitted to DSA.

1.4 Pre-Check (PC) Documents

The requirements of Section 2 below apply to construction documents for PC approvals. See also Section 6.1 of *Procedure (PR) 07-01: Pre-Check (PC) Approval Procedure* for additional requirements. For changes to an approved PC document, see Sections 3 and 4 below and IR A-18 Section 3.

2. CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

In accordance with BPC Sections 5536.1, 6735, 6735.3, and 6735.4, the DPGRC and other design professionals delegated responsibility for portions of the project, shall stamp (seal) and sign the drawings (plans) and specifications for which they are responsible in accordance with this section.

2.1 Initial Submission for Plan Review

The DPGRC and other design professionals delegated portions of the design need not sign the initial construction documents submitted for plan review. These documents shall bear the stamp (seal) of the responsible design professional and notation defining the intent of the document per BPC Sections 6735, 6735.3, and 6735.2, such as "For Plan Check Only" or "Not For Construction".

2.2 Drawings (Plans)

Stamp (seal), signature, date of signing, and license number shall be shown on each sheet of the drawings (plans) released for construction. The license expiration date shall also be included when required in accordance with Section 1.2 above. All required design professional signatures must be provided before the project will be approved by DSA.

2.3 Specifications

Stamp (seal), signature, date of signing, and license number shall be shown on the cover sheet or signature sheet of the specifications released for construction. The license expiration date shall also be included when required in accordance with Section 1.2 above. All required design professional signatures must be provided before the project will be approved by DSA.

2.4 Site or Landscape Work

The DPGRC of a project may delegate design of site work or landscape work containing access compliance or fire and life safety features. Documents for these portions of a project may be prepared, stamped (sealed), and signed by a competent landscape architect or civil engineer, in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 16: Professional and Vocational Regulations, Division 5, Section 415 and as permitted by BPC Sections 5615 and 6731, respectively.

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2.4.1 If the entire project consists only of site work and does not affect any school buildings as defined by CAC Section 4-314, a California registered civil engineer may assume general responsible charge of the project.

2.4.2 If the entire project consists of only landscape work and does not affect any school buildings as defined by CAC Section 4-314, a California registered landscape architect may assume general responsible charge of the project.

2.5 Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical, and Telecommunications Work

The design of building mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and telecommunication systems is commonly performed by engineers with expertise in these systems. Construction documents for these portions of a project may be prepared, stamped (sealed), and signed by a competent mechanical or electrical engineer, in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 16: Professional and Vocational Regulations, Division 5, Section 415 and as permitted by BPC Sections 6731.6 and 6731.5, respectively.

2.5.1 The DPGRC of a project may delegate design of mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and telecommunication systems. Mechanical and electrical engineers with delegated responsibility are listed lines 24b and 24c, respectively, of the form DSA 1.

2.5.2 In accordance with the Exception of CAC Section 4-316(a), if the entire project consists of alterations to the mechanical or plumbing systems in an existing building, a licensed mechanical engineer may act as the DPGRC.

2.5.3 In accordance with the Exception of CAC Section 4-316(a), if the entire project consists of alterations to the electrical or telecommunication systems in an existing building, a licensed electrical engineer may act as the DPGRC.

2.5.4 In accordance with Education Code Section 17302(b), DSA will make the final determination on a project-specific basis of scope that is acceptable for a mechanical or electrical engineer to serve as the DPGRC.

2.6 Post-Approval Documents

Post-approval documents include addenda, construction change documents (CCD), revisions, and deferred submittals, which are reviewed and approved by DSA as described in *PR 18-04: Electronic Plan Review for Design Professionals*, Section 5.

2.6.1 Addenda, CCD, and revisions are post-approval documents that modify the original DSA-approved construction documents. As such, these documents shall be stamped and signed in accordance with Sections 2.2 and 2.3 above. Refer to IR A-18 Section 2.1 and PR 18-04 Section 5.2 for additional information. For CCD refer also to *IR A-6: Construction Change Document Submittal and Approval Process*, Section 2 for additional information.

2.6.2 Refer to IR A-18 Section 2.3 for deferred submittal stamp and signature requirements.

3. INCOMPLETE DOCUMENTS

In some circumstances, design professionals are unable to complete documents (e.g., construction documents, deferred submittal documents, PC documents, etc.) that require their stamp (seal) and signature. These circumstances may be caused by changes in employment, death, or the expiration, suspension, or revocation of the license. In such cases, another licensed design professional shall assume responsibility for the project or delegated portion of the project from the original design professional in accordance with CAC Sections 4-316(c) and 4-316(d).

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4. RESTAMPING AND RESIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

Restamping and resigning of valid documents is not required except as described in this section. DSA reserves the right to make the final decision of whether restamping and resigning is required on a case-by-case basis. Refer to IR A-18 Section 3 for changes made to construction documents prepared by delegated design professionals.

4.1 Restamping and Resigning Not Required

When a set of documents is properly stamped and signed by an architect or engineer whose license or registration was current at the time of signing, it is considered valid.

4.1.1 In the case of the death of a design professional, all documents signed prior to death while the license was current shall be considered valid after death unless there is cause.

4.1.2 Similarly, if the license of a design professional expires, is suspended, or is revoked, all documents signed prior to the expiration, suspension, or revocation shall be considered valid unless there is cause.

4.2 Restamping and Resigning Required

Restamping and resigning are generally not required unless there is a probable cause, which includes, but is not limited to, the following cases:

4.2.1 The DPGRC assumes responsibility in accordance with Section 3 above.

4.2.2 The stamp (seal) was improperly or fraudulently placed on the document.

4.2.3 The signature was forged.

4.2.4 The document has expired or become void.

REFERENCES:

California Business and Professions Code (BPC), Sections 5536.1, 5615, 6703, 6731, 6735, 6735.3, 6735.4.

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 16

Professional and Vocational Regulations, Division 5, Section 415.

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 24

Part 1: California Administrative Code (CAC), Sections 4-314, 4-316, 4-317.

This IR is intended for use by DSA staff and by design professionals to promote statewide consistency for review and approval of plans and specifications as well as construction oversight of projects within the jurisdiction of DSA, which includes State of California public schools (K-12), community colleges and state-owned or state-leased essential services buildings. This IR indicates an acceptable method for achieving compliance with applicable codes and regulations, although other methods proposed by design professionals may be considered by DSA.

This IR is subject to revision at any time. Please check DSA's website for currently effective IRs. Only IRs listed on the webpage at www.dgs.ca.gov/dsa/publications at the time of project application submittal to DSA are considered applicable.