

ANSWERS & BASICS FOR CONSUMERS REGARDING CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS (CIDs)



Hiring a Certified Interior Designer ensures that you'll be working with an experienced and competent design professional.

If you've never worked with an interior designer before, the process can be overwhelming. This brochure is designed to help you make informed decisions about hiring the best interior designer for your residential, retail, office, or other commercial project.

Once you've decided to hire an interior designer, choosing one is of paramount importance. Many people call themselves interior designers, but if you are a consumer with a complex project, be sure you hire someone who is truly qualified to execute the task at hand.

This should be someone who is trained to guide you through dozens, sometimes hundreds of decisions, challenges, and opportunities all to a successful result.

The Certified Interior Designer Title Act was written into the California Business and Professions Code ([CA BPC 5800 - 5812](#)); providing an official designation for interior designers who meet education, experience and examination requirements as administered by CCIDC (California Council for Interior Design Certification).

- The California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC), (a non-profit Certification Board) was established in 1992 as the entity responsible for the administration of the California Certified Interior Designers Title Act.
- Under the Certified Interior Designers Title Act, Designers are qualified by CCIDC upon evidence of a combination of education and/or experience, and passage of the IDEX® California Examination (IDEX®). The IDEX® is the only interior design exam that covers California Codes and Regulations.
- Only CCIDC can determine eligibility to be a Certified Interior Designer in the State of California.
- Upon qualification, a Certified Interior Designer (CID) will be identified by an individual number which appears on a stamp with which to place on non-structural and non-seismic drawings and documents.
- Certified Interior Designers (CID), as mandated by the State of California, have met high qualification standards, and are held to a strict [code of ethics and conduct](#).



WHAT IS A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER? (CA BPC Section [5800](#), [5538](#))

As opposed to a noncertified interior designer, a Certified Interior Designer is a competent design professional who is qualified to design, prepare, and submit any type of non-structural, non-seismic interior construction plans and specifications to local building departments. Certified Interior Designers have demonstrated through education, experience and examination their knowledge of the building code as it relates to space planning, life safety, flammability and disabled access code issues.

WHAT ARE THE MEANINGS OF THE TERMS “NONSTRUCTURAL” AND “NON-SEISMIC”?

“Nonstructural” means interior elements that are non-load bearing. It excludes the structural grid system supporting a building.

“Non-seismic” means interior elements that do not assist in the seismic bracing of a building's structural system.

Common non-structural items include ceiling and partition systems. These components employ normal and typical bracing conventions and do not assist in the structural integrity of a building.



WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER, AND WHO MAY REFER TO THEMSELVES AS A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER? (CA BPC Section [5801](#) [5801.1](#))

A Certified Interior Designer must have completed:

1. Met one of the following minimum qualification requirements:
 - a. 80+ Semester Core Units from accredited design program (120+ Quarter Units) plus two years of diversified design experience.
 - b. 60 - 79 Semester Core Units from accredited design program (90+ Quarter Units) plus three years of diversified design experience.

- c. 40 - 59 Semester Core Units from accredited design program (60+ Quarter Units) plus four years of diversified design experience.
 - d. Minimum eight years of diversified design experience, interior design education, or combination of both, that total eight years.
2. Upon proof of qualification, candidates must pass the IDEX® California examination specifically developed for certification based upon the California Building Code, Title 24, California laws and regulations as well as fulfilling one of the four categories above.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT THE INTERIOR DESIGNER I AM HIRING IS CERTIFIED?

Go online to www.ccidc.org and look under [Verify Certification](#) to verify whether the interior designer is indeed certified and in good standing.



HAS YOUR DESIGNER SIGNED A CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT?

Ask your designer if they have signed and agreed to abide by a Code of Ethics and Conduct. Ask them for a copy. All Certified Interior Designers are required to sign and abide by the [CCIDC Code of Ethics and Conduct](#).

HOW WILL THE CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER BE IDENTIFIED? (CA BPC Section [5802](#)) Each Certified Interior Designer should affix a stamp and a wet signature to all drawings, specifications or documents prepared for submission. All documents shall be presented as interior design documents, not as architectural or engineering documents.

WHAT THE CCIDC STAMP LOOKS LIKE:



ARE CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS STATE CERTIFIED? (CA BPC Section [5804](#) and Section [5538](#))

No. The California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC) is a private nonprofit corporation that reports to the state legislature and is responsible for certifying interior designers. The certification process in California is a Title Act, as directed by the California Business and Professions Code, Section [5800](#).

Anyone may use the term Interior designer, however their qualifications for professional practice are unknown. If they are not a Certified Interior Designer, they may not have the knowledge and ability to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

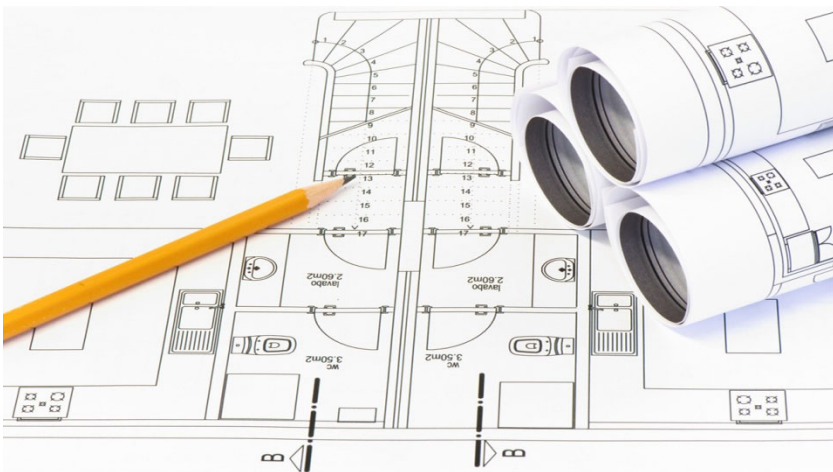
MAY A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER ACT AS A GENERAL CONTRACTOR AND HIRE SUBCONTRACTORS FOR PROJECTS? (CA BPC Section [5803](#))

No. The Certified Interior Designer would have to hold a valid contractor's license in order to hire subcontractors and/or perform contracting work. Certified Interior Designers prepare designs for work to be performed by licensed contractors.

MAY CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS DESIGN DISABLED ACCESS SYSTEMS?

Yes. Certified Interior Designers are required to pass the IDEX California examination in order to demonstrate proficiency in disabled access and other code requirements.

They are recognized by Section [5800\(a\)](#) to have ...”demonstrated by means of education, experience, and examination the competency to protect and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the public.”



MAY CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER PLANS INCLUDE MECHANICAL OR ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING DRAWINGS?

Yes, if the mechanical and electrical elements have been prepared and stamped by a licensed mechanical or electrical engineer.

HOW CAN I FIND A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER FOR MY PROJECT?

The Certified Interior Designer has the education, training, and experience to guide you through the entire design process - from helping define the initial project goals, to meeting budgets and schedules. A certified professional can actually save you considerable time and expense by knowing how to get the most out of your design budget, and by avoiding costly mistakes. Fees for certified interior designers are very competitive in the marketplace. Click [Hire a Local CID](#) for a list of current certified interior design professionals in your area.



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BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE - BPC

DIVISION 3. PROFESSIONS AND VOCATIONS GENERALLY [5000 - 9998.11] (*Heading of Division 3 added by Stats. 1939, Ch. 30.*)

CHAPTER 3.9. Interior Designers [5800 - 5812] (*Chapter 3.9 added by Stats. 1990, Ch. 396, Sec. 1.*)

5800. As used in this chapter:

(a) "Certified interior designer" means a person who prepares and submits nonstructural or nonseismic plans consistent with Sections 5805 and 5538 to local building departments that are of sufficient complexity so as to require the skills of a licensed contractor to implement them, and who engages in programming, planning, designing, and documenting the construction and installation of nonstructural or nonseismic elements, finishes and furnishings within the interior spaces of a building, and has demonstrated by means of education, experience and examination, the competency to protect and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

(b) An "interior design organization" means a nonprofit organization, exempt from taxation under Section 501(c) (3) of Title 26 of the United States Code, of certified interior designers whose governing board shall include representatives of the public, except that an organization that is not currently exempt under that section that submits an application to the Internal Revenue Service requesting an exemption under that section shall be eligible to be an interior design organization if it meets the requirements under that section within a reasonable period of time.

(Amended by Stats. 2001, Ch. 495, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2002. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5801. A certified interior designer may obtain a stamp from an interior design organization that shall include a number that uniquely identifies and bears the name of that certified interior designer. The stamp certifies that the interior designer has provided the interior design organization with evidence of passage of an interior design examination approved by that interior design organization and any of the following:

(a) He or she is a graduate of a four- or five-year accredited interior design degree program, and has two years of diversified interior design experience.

(b) He or she has completed a three-year accredited interior design certificate program, and has completed three years of diversified interior design experience.

(c) He or she has completed a two-year accredited interior design program and has completed four years of diversified interior design experience.

(d) He or she has at least eight years of interior design education, or at least eight years of diversified interior design experience, or a combination of interior design education and diversified interior design experience that together total at least eight years.

(Amended by Stats. 2009, Ch. 308, Sec. 81. (SB 819) Effective January 1, 2010. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5801.1. The procedure for the issuance of a stamp by an interior design organization under Section 5801, including the examinations recognized and required by the organization, shall be subject to the occupational analyses and examination validation required by Section 139 every five to seven years.

(Added by Stats. 2001, Ch. 495, Sec. 2. Effective January 1, 2002. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5802. (a) All drawings, specifications, or documents prepared for submission to any government regulatory agency by any certified interior designer, or under his or her supervision shall be affixed by a stamp, as specified in Section 5801, and signed by that certified interior designer.

(b) All such documents shall be identified as interior design documents, which are not architectural or engineering documents.

(Added by Stats. 1990, Ch. 396, Sec. 1. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5803. A certified interior designer, as defined in this chapter, is exempt from Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 insofar as he or she is designing systems for work to be performed by a licensed contractor.

(Added by Stats. 1990, Ch. 396, Sec. 1. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5804. It is an unfair business practice for any certified interior designer or any other person to advertise or put out any sign or card or other device, including any stamp or seal, or to represent to the public through any print or electronic media, that he or she is "state certified" to practice interior design, or to use any other words or symbols that represent to the public that he or she is so certified.

(Added by Stats. 1990, Ch. 396, Sec. 1. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5805. Nothing in this chapter shall preclude certified interior designers or any other person from submitting interior design plans to local building officials, except as provided in Section 5538. In exercising discretion with respect to the acceptance of interior design plans, the local building official shall reference the California Building Standards Code.

(Amended by Stats. 2011, Ch. 432, Sec. 1. (SB 944) Effective January 1, 2012. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5806. Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit interior design or interior decorator services by any person or retail activity.

(Added by Stats. 2013, Ch. 333, Sec. 1. (SB 308) Effective January 1, 2014. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5807. (a) A certified interior designer shall use a written contract when contracting to provide interior design services to a client pursuant to this chapter. The written contract shall be executed by the certified interior designer and the client, or his or her representative, prior to the certified interior designer commencing work. The written contract shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

- (1) A description of the services to be provided to the client by the certified interior designer.
- (2) A description of any basis of compensation applicable to the contract and the method of payment agreed upon by the parties.
- (3) The name, address, and certification number of the certified interior designer and the name and address of the client.
- (4) A description of the procedure that the certified interior designer and the client will use to accommodate additional services.
- (5) A description of the procedure to be used by any party to terminate the contract.
- (6) A three-day rescission clause in accordance with Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 1688) of Title 5 of Part 2 of Division 3 of the Civil Code.
- (7) A written disclosure stating whether the certified interior designer carries errors and omissions insurance.

(b) Subdivision (a) shall not apply to any of the following:

(1) Interior design services rendered by a certified interior designer for which the client will not pay compensation.

(2) Interior design services rendered by a certified interior designer to any of the following:

(A) An architect licensed under Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 5500).

(B) A landscape architect licensed under Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 5615).

(C) An engineer licensed under Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 6700).

(c) As used in this section, "written contract" includes a contract in electronic form.

(Added by Stats. 2013, Ch. 333, Sec. 2. (SB 308) Effective January 1, 2014. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5810. (a) This chapter shall be subject to review by the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature.

(b) This chapter shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2023, and as of that date is repealed.

(Amended by Stats. 2020, Ch. 312, Sec. 45. (SB 1474) Effective January 1, 2021. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, by its own provisions. Note: Repeal affects Chapter 3.9, comprising Sections 5800 to 5812.)

5811. An interior design organization issuing stamps under Section 5801 shall provide to the Joint Committee on Boards, Commissions, and Consumer Protection by September 1, 2008, a report that reviews and assesses the costs and benefits associated with the California Code and Regulations Examination and explores feasible alternatives to that examination.

(Amended by Stats. 2006, Ch. 658, Sec. 88. Effective January 1, 2007. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5811.1. The meetings of an interior design organization issuing stamps under Section 5801 shall be subject to the rules of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code).

(Added by Stats. 2013, Ch. 333, Sec. 4. (SB 308) Effective January 1, 2014. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)

5812. It is an unfair business practice for any person to represent or hold himself or herself out as, or to use the title "certified interior designer" or any other term, such as "licensed," "registered," or "CID," that implies or suggests that the person is certified as an interior designer when he or she does not hold a valid certification as provided in Sections 5800 and 5801.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 333, Sec. 5. (SB 308) Effective January 1, 2014. Repealed as of January 1, 2023, pursuant to Section 5810.)