

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR BUILDING OFFICIALS REGARDING CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS (CIDs)



After several years of legislative efforts by interior design groups and the California Legislative Conference on Interior Design, a law went into effect on January 1, 1991, outlining the parameters and responsibilities of work that an interior designer can perform. Along with these guidelines, 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? (B&P Code Section [5800](#), [5538](#))

A Certified Interior Designer is a competent design professional who is qualified to design, prepare, and submit 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 QUALIFICATIONS OF A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER? (B&P Code Section [5801](#) [5801.1](#))

A Certified Interior Designer must have completed:

- A four or five year accredited interior design program and have a minimum of two years experience, or;
- A three year accredited interior design program and have a minimum of three years experience, or;
- A two year accredited interior design program and have a minimum of four years experience, or,
- Have a combination of interior design education and experience for a minimum total of eight years.

They must pass the IDEX® California examination specifically developed for certification based upon the California Building Code, Title 24, California laws and regulations.

WHO MAY REFER TO THEMSELVES AS A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER?

Only persons who have met the education, experience, and examination requirements, and have been certified by the California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC) may refer to themselves as a Certified Interior Designer.

HOW WILL THE CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER BE IDENTIFIED? (B&P Code 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.

ARE LICENSED ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS THE ONLY DESIGN PROFESSIONALS WHO CAN SUBMIT CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS FOR PLAN REVIEW?

No. The Building Official is authorized to recognize the Certified Interior Designer's (CID) drawings and documents. For the plan check acceptance, the building official shall reference the California Building Code.

MAY A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER ACT AS A GENERAL CONTRACTOR AND HIRE SUBCONTRACTORS FOR PROJECTS? (B&P Code 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.

ARE CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS STATE CERTIFIED? (B&P Code Section [5804](#) and Section [5538](#))

No. The California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC) is a nonprofit certification board 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](#) – [5812](#).

DOES THE CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS TITLE ACT PRECLUDE ANYONE FROM CALLING THEMSELVES AN “INTERIOR DESIGNER”?

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.



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.

CAN CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS DESIGN, PLAN OR PREPARE INSTRUMENTS OF SERVICE FOR STOREFRONTS OR INTERIOR ALTERATIONS?

Yes. CA BPC Section [6745](#) allows anyone to perform these services “...provided such alterations do not affect the structural safety of the building.”

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.

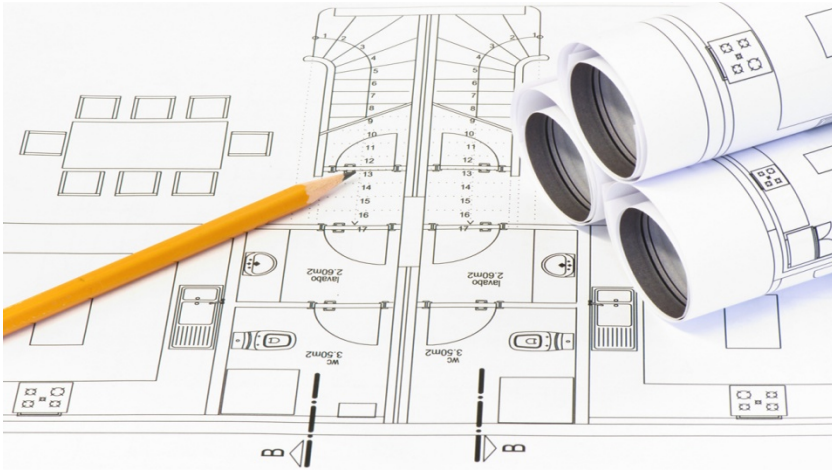
They are recognized by Section [5800\(a\)](#) to have ...”demonstrated by means of education, experience, and examination the competency to protect and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the public.”

MAY CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER PLANS INCLUDE HORIZONTAL EXITING SYSTEMS?

Yes, Certified Interior Designers have been specifically tested on these CA Codes and have the education and experience to work with occupancy, exiting and life safety requirements for interior spaces.

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.



WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE IN THE CHANGED LANGUAGE REGARDING CABPC SECTION 5538, AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO SECTION 5805 FOR CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS (CID)?

The language in CABPC Section [5538](#) "...including but not limited to structural or seismic components" as elements of building safety, was removed. Certified Interior Designers are only restricted by seismic and structural considerations when planning interior alterations.

Section [5805](#) affirms the legislative intent of opening the plan check process to qualified individuals and refers to compliance with the California Building Standards Code as approval criteria.

HOW CAN BUILDING DEPARTMENTS CHECK IF A DESIGNER IS CERTIFIED AND/OR IF THEIR CERTIFICATION IS VALID?

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

HOW WILL CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS PROVIDE IDENTIFICATION TO BUILDING DEPARTMENTS?

Their CID Number will be included on the Plan Check Application in the section that requests a designer's "license" number. The CID Number and Certification Expiration number is also included within their stamp.

WHAT THE CCIDC STAMP LOOKS LIKE:

