

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:

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.

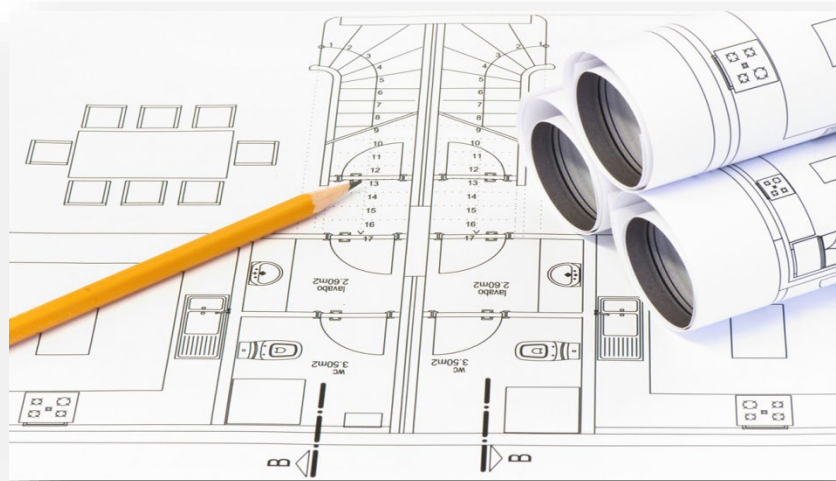
MAY A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER ACT AS A GENERAL CONTRACTOR AND HIRE SUBCONTRACTORS FOR PROJECTS? (CA BPC Section [5803](#))

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.