

THE CID ADVANTAGE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS



Why Hire a Certified Interior Designer?

Working with a Certified Interior Designer ensures that you're partnering with a highly skilled professional who brings experience, training, and expertise to your project. If you've never collaborated with an interior designer before, the process can feel overwhelming. This guide is here to help you make informed decisions when selecting the right designer for your residential, retail, office, or other commercial space.

Once you've decided to hire an interior designer, choosing the right one is crucial. Many individuals claim to be interior designers, but when dealing with a complex project, it's essential to hire someone who is truly qualified to deliver outstanding results. You need a trained professional who can navigate countless decisions, challenges, and opportunities, ensuring your project's success. and are held to a strict [code of ethics and conduct](#).

What Makes a Certified Interior Designer Different?

The **Certified Interior Designer Title Act** is a law in the California's Business and Professions Code (CA BPC [5800-5812](#)) and establishes an official designation for interior designers who meet strict education, experience, and examination standards set by the California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC).

Key Highlights:

- Under this act, designers are certified based on their education, experience, and the completion of the IDEX® California Examination, which is the only exam that tests knowledge of California's building codes and regulations.
- Only CCIDC has the authority to determine eligibility for certification in California.
- Certified Interior Designers (CID) receive a unique number that is placed on documents and drawings they submit, indicating they've met the high standards set by the state.



What Does It Mean to Be Certified?

A **Certified Interior Designer** is qualified to design and submit non-structural, non-seismic interior construction plans and specifications to local building departments. They have proven their expertise in the building code as it applies to space planning, life safety, flammability, and disabled access codes.

building code as it relates to space planning, life safety, flammability and disabled access code issues. (CA BPC Section [5800](#), [5538](#))

Certification Qualifications: (CA BPC Section [5801 5801.1](#))

To become a Certified Interior Designer in California, individuals must meet one of the following criteria:

1. **80+ Semester Core Units** from an accredited design program (120+ Quarter Units) and **2 years of diversified design experience**.
2. **60-79 Semester Core Units** (90+ Quarter Units) and **3 years of diversified design experience**.
3. **40-59 Semester Core Units** (60+ Quarter Units) and **4 years of diversified design experience**.
4. **8 years of combined experience and education** in interior design.

After meeting these requirements, candidates must pass the **IDEX® California exam**, which covers the California Building Code and other relevant laws and regulations.

Ethics and Professional Conduct

All Certified Interior Designers must adhere to a strict **Code of Ethics and Conduct**. Ask your designer if they follow this code and download a copy from the CCIDC website for your reference.

How to Verify Certification

To check if your designer is a Certified Interior Designer, visit the CCIDC website at www.ccidc.org and use the "Verify Certification" tool.

How Certified Interior Designers are Identified

Certified Interior Designers must sign and stamp all interior design documents they prepare, ensuring that the work meets state standards for non-structural and non-seismic interior design. These documents are clearly marked as interior design work, not architectural or engineering documents.

Sample CID Stamp:



Can a Certified Interior Designer Act as a General Contractor?

No, a Certified Interior Designer cannot hire subcontractors or perform contracting work unless they hold a valid contractor's license. However, they can design spaces and prepare plans for licensed contractors to execute.

Can a Certified Interior Designer Design Disabled Access Systems?

Yes, Certified Interior Designers are trained to design spaces with disabled access in mind and have passed the necessary examinations to ensure their designs comply with access requirements.

Can a CID's Plans Include Mechanical or Electrical Engineering Drawings?

Yes, Certified Interior Designers can prepare plans that include mechanical or electrical systems, providing those elements have been stamped by licensed engineers.

How to Find a Certified Interior Designer

Hiring a Certified Interior Designer means you have a professional who can guide you through the entire design process, from defining your project's goals to sticking to your budget and timeline. With their expertise, they can save you time and money, helping you avoid costly mistakes.

To find a **Certified Interior Designer** near you, visit the "**Hire a Local CID**" section on the CCIDC website for a list of qualified professionals.