

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

**Introduction:** After years of legislative efforts, a law went into effect on January 1, 1991, outlining the scope and responsibilities of interior designers in California. The Certified Interior Designer Title Act was codified under the California Business and Professions Code (CA BPC 5800 – 5812), providing an official designation for interior designers who meet rigorous education, experience, and examination requirements through the **California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC)**.

- **CCIDC**, established in 1992, administers the California Certified Interior Designer Title Act.
- Certified Interior Designers (CIDs) are certified design professionals recognized for their expertise in space planning, life safety, accessibility, and compliance with California Codes.

### **WHAT IS A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER?**

*(B&P Code Section 5800, 5538)*

A Certified Interior Designer is a competent design professional qualified to design, prepare, and submit non-structural, non-seismic interior construction plans to local building departments. They have demonstrated knowledge of the building code, including space planning, life safety, flammability, and accessibility issues.

### **QUALIFICATIONS OF A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER**

*(B&P Code Section 5801, 5801.1)*

To become a CID, an individual must meet specific educational and professional experience requirements:

- **Option 1:** A four or five-year, accredited, interior design program plus two years of experience.
- **Option 2:** A three-year, accredited, interior design program plus three years of experience.
- **Option 3:** A two-year, accredited, interior design program plus four years of experience.
- **Option 4:** A combination of education and experience totaling at least eight years.

Additionally, candidates must pass the **IDEX® California Examination**, which is the only interior design exam that includes California Building Code, Title 24, and other relevant laws and regulations.

### **HOW TO IDENTIFY A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER**

*(B&P Code Section 5802)*

Certified Interior Designers can be identified by their unique CID number, which appears on a stamp placed on all relevant non-structural, non-seismic drawings and documents. These drawings must be presented as interior design documents, not architectural or engineering documents.

### **COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS**

#### **Can Certified Interior Designers Design and Submit Construction Documents?**

Yes, they are authorized to submit non-structural and non-seismic documents for plan review, subject to the California Building Code.

#### **Can a Certified Interior Designer Act as a General Contractor?**

No, they must hold a valid contractor's license to hire subcontractors or perform contracting work.

## Can Anyone Call Themselves an Interior Designer?

Yes, but only those certified by CCIDC can call themselves a **Certified Interior Designer or CID** and have met education, experience, and examination standards to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

## SPECIFIC DESIGN CAPABILITIES OF CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNERS

- **Designing Non-Structural and Non-Seismic Elements:**  
CIDs are qualified to design and submit plans for elements like partition systems, ceiling systems, and other non-load-bearing elements. These do not affect the building's structural integrity.
- **Designing Storefronts and Interior Alterations:**  
Yes, providing the alterations do not affect the structural safety of the building.
- **Designing Disabled Access Systems:**  
Yes, CIDs must demonstrate knowledge in accessibility requirements and are tested on this during the **IDEX® California Examination**.
- **Including Mechanical or Electrical Drawings:**  
Yes, but the mechanical and electrical components must be prepared and stamped by licensed engineers.

## UNDERSTANDING "NON-STRUCTURAL" AND "NON-SEISMIC"

- **Non-Structural:**  
Elements that do not bear weight or load, such as interior partitions and ceiling systems.
- **Non-Seismic:**  
Elements that do not contribute to the seismic bracing or stability of a building's structural system.

## HOW BUILDING OFFICIALS CAN VERIFY A CERTIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER'S STATUS

- To verify a designer's certification, visit [www.ccidc.org](http://www.ccidc.org) and use the "Verify Certification" tool.
- Certified Interior Designers will provide their CID number on the Plan Check Application and include it in their stamp and documents.

## LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR BUILDING OFFICIALS

- The removal of structural and seismic references in **B&P Code Section 5538** clarifies that Certified Interior Designers are only restricted by seismic and structural concerns in interior design projects.
- **B&P Section 5805** ensures that qualified individuals, including CIDs, can submit plans for review under the California Building Standards Code.