



City of Carmel-by-the-Sea
Building Safety Division
Standard Operating Guidance (SOG)

18-03 Alternate Materials, Design and Methods of Construction

Background

The CA Building, Fire, Electrical, Plumbing and Mechanical Codes as adopted under Title 15 of the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea municipal code prescribes requirements for materials, design considerations, and methods of construction for construction work. The code allows for both prescriptive (by-the-book) and performance-based approaches to these elements of such projects. In addition, the codes make provisions for the proposed use of alternate materials, designs, or methods of construction. This SOG provides guidance on the procedure for requesting approval of performance-based design and alternate materials, designs and methods of construction.

Citations

Carmel Municipal Code Title 15, Buildings and Construction
CA Building Code, Sec. 104.11
CA Residential Code Sec. 104.11
CA Fire Code Sec. 104.9
CA Mechanical Code Sec. 302.2
CA Plumbing Code Sec. 301.3
CA Electrical Code Sec. Sec. 89.111.2.4

Guidance

In general, the referenced codes state that “The provisions of this code are not intended to prevent the installation of any material or to prohibit any design or method of construction not specifically prescribed by this code, provided that any such alternative has been approved. An alternative material, design or method of construction shall be approved where the building official finds that the proposed design is satisfactory and complies with the intent of the provisions of this code, and that the material, method, or work offered is, for the purpose intended, not less than the equivalent of that prescribed in this code in quality, strength, effectiveness, fire resistance, durability and safety. Where the alternative material, design or method of construction is not approved, the building official shall respond in writing, stating the reasons why the alternative was not approved”.

Procedure

All requests for consideration of an alternate material, design, or method of construction shall be submitted to the building official in writing and shall include:

- A completed Application for Approval of Alternative Materials, Design and Methods of Construction;
- A current code citation for the code section for which the alternate is proposed and a description of why the alternate is being proposed rather than compliance with the prescribed code requirements.
- A description of the proposed alternate material, design, or method of construction including

Manufacturer's cut-sheets, specifications and listing information, and contact information for the manufacturer of the proposed alternate material or equipment

- A comparison of the *alternative* with the code requirements in terms of suitability, effectiveness, quality, durability, fire resistance, safety, structural strength, and any other impacts affecting the building or its occupants.

The application and supporting documentation shall be dated, signed and stamped by the registered design professional in responsible charge for the project. The registered design professional shall coordinate construction documents to reflect the alternative proposal and shall be responsible for incorporating all of the specifics of the proposal and conditions of approval into the reproducible drawings.

Upon receipt, the building official and/or fire marshal shall review the proposed *alternative* and supporting documentation for equivalent conformance with adopted codes, ordinances and regulations. If the City officials do not have the expertise on staff to make a thorough and competent review, a third-party or peer review process may be utilized. The cost of any such review shall be paid by the applicant as specified in the City of Carmel fee schedule.