

# **Structural Peer Review Process**

**BPC-020**

**Purpose:** To provide information and requirements for building permit submittal under the Structural Peer Review Process.

**Background:** The Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) has established the Structural Peer Review Policy [\(9-4-7\)](#) for a structural peer review process that can be used to shorten the plan check time between project submittal and permit issuance. A complete submittal of documents, including but not limited to, plans, specifications, structural calculations, energy calculation, soils reports and fire safe standards compliance is required. Incomplete submittal packages will delay the plan check process. See Building Plan Check Submittal Checklist, [\(BPC-003\)](#) for more information on required submittal documents and current adopted codes and ordinances.

Structural Peer Review is used for single story non-conventional and multi-story conventional or non- conventional buildings. Projects with a building design that requires approval by the Building Official as an alternate design or method of construction do not qualify.

The California State Licensed structural engineer, or the California State Licensed civil engineer who holds certification as an ICC certified plans examiner or a pre-approved third party consultant who performs the structural peer review shall be independent from the design engineer or any design firm involved in the project (Engineer of Record). There shall be one engineer that takes responsibility for reviewing the foundation and the structure supported by that foundation.

The peer reviewing engineer shall verify that the design incorporates all necessary code complying structural requirements into the drawings and that the drawings are structurally correct. The peer reviewing engineer shall then write a letter which must fully identify project drawings by date, description and number of pages in the letter. Alternatively, the peer reviewing engineer may indicate, in a readily discernible manner, directly on the drawings, which drawings have been reviewed, and contain a statement that the drawings have been reviewed and found in conformance with the appropriate codes.

## **Procedure:**

1. The applicant shall submit building plans and the letter from the engineer who completed the peer review to PRMD and complete the attached Structural Peer Review Questionnaire. A PRMD building plans examiner shall determine if the project qualifies for Structural Peer Review. If the project qualifies, the fee is 75% of the standard building plan check fee.



**Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department**  
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2. PRMD building check staff review the plans for compliance with life safety, fire safe standards and energy compliance. A brief review of the structural system will be completed to determine that the structural elements identified in the design calculations are identified on the building plans.
3. If, during the non-structural plan check, the structural peer review is found to be inadequate, the project shall be subject to the standard plan check procedure and full plan check fees shall be charged.

### **Information/Requirements:**

1. If a site specific soils report is not included, use Chapter 18 of 2016 California Building Code (CBC), Table 1806.2, Class 5 soil for design purposes (1,500 psf). If a soils report exists, the design and drawings must be consistent with the recommendations in the report. Soils engineer design review and approval letter must be included with final submittal documents.
2. Seismic Design Category shall be determined per section 1613.3.5 of the CBC. The structural design shall meet the standards of the determined design category.
3. Wind design speed shall be 85 mph nominal design wind speed ( $v_{asd}$ ) or 110 mph ultimate design wind speed ( $v_{ult}$ ), Exposure C or Exposure D in the Coastal area per section 1609 of the CBC. If the design engineer can justify Exposure B and the peer reviewing engineer agrees, Exposure B may be used. Justification must be in writing and must be more than a simple statement of the design engineer's opinion.
4. Conventional construction shall comply with Section 2308, of the CBC or R602.10 of the 2016 California Residential Code.
5. The structural roof framing for cathedral/vaulted ceilings must be adequate in size to contain the insulation needed for the California Energy Commission requirements plus ventilation space.
6. If there are any changes to the structural design, either through corrections requested by PRMD or revisions to the plans, the engineer must acknowledge the changes to the design with a supplemental report. The supplemental report must be submitted with the revised drawings and calculations submitted by the Engineer of Record. This procedure applies to any design changes made during construction.



# Structural Peer Review Questionnaire

**To be completed by applicant:**

**YES**                      **NO**

- 1) One or two family dwelling
- 2) Commercial building
- 3) Type of construction                      \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Site Evaluation completed
- Site Evaluation permit number:                      \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Structural peer review letter

I hereby request the Structural Peer Review Process for my project:

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

----- \_ DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - To Be Completed by PRMD Staff \_ -----

**YES**                      **NO**

Authorized for structural peer review:                                           

If no, state reason:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Job \_\_\_\_\_

Building Permit Number: \_\_\_\_\_



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