

Special Inspection and Testing Procedure

CNI-010

❖ **Purpose:** The purpose of this form is to inform building permit applicants of the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) requirements for projects requiring special inspection per Sections 1704, 1707 & 1708, and/or structural observations per Section 1709, of the 2007 edition of the California Building Code (CBC). ❖

1. Before a permit can be issued

If special inspection is required, the owner, or the registered design professional in responsible charge acting as the owner's agent, shall read and be familiar with this policy and complete two (2) copies of the Statement of Special Inspections form ([CNI-033](#)). The completed form shall become a part of the approved construction documents. A preconstruction meeting may be required prior to the start of work. A copy of this procedure and the Statement of Special Inspections form will be attached to the approved plan set.

2. Approval of special inspector

Each special inspection agency, testing facility, and special inspector shall be recognized by the Building Official, as meeting the qualifications set forth in Section 1703.1 of the CBC, prior to performing any duties. Each special inspection agency must submit to the Building Official, a company profile including resumes of all employees, their certifications and a list of the types of work for which recognition is requested. An approved agency must be objective and competent, and disclose any possible conflicts of interest. The approved agency shall have adequate equipment to perform required tests. Special inspectors shall carry approved identification when performing the functions of a special inspector. Identification cards shall follow the criteria set by the California Council of Testing and Inspection Agencies. No personnel changes shall be made without first obtaining the approval of the building official. Any unauthorized personnel changes may result in a "Stop Work Order" and possible permit revocation.

3. Structural observation

In addition to other special inspection requirements, the owner shall employ a registered design professional to perform structural observations per Section 1709.2 of the CBC. This requirement and frequency of inspection shall be determined prior to permit issuance, and outlined in the Statement of Special Inspections form, or during construction if the Building Official deems structural compliance with the approved plans cannot be reasonably assured without structural observation.

4. Special inspection and structural tests

Special inspection and testing shall meet the minimum requirements of the CBC, Chapter 17. The Special Inspector and/or architect or engineer of record is **not authorized** to do any of the following:

- a. Inspect or approve any work for which the building permit has not been issued;
- b. Direct any work to commence before the Construction Inspection Section has completed its inspection. Deviations from this procedure must be requested in writing from the Building Official. *Exception: Prefabricated components per Section 1704.2.1 of the California Building Code.*
- c. Inspect or approve any work other than that for which they are specifically certified;
- d. Approve alternative materials, structural changes, or revisions to plans without prior approval of the Building Official.

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department

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5. Observe work

The Special Inspector shall test and/or observe, on either a periodic or continuous basis, the work specified in the approved Statement of Special Inspections form for conformance to the approved construction documents and the applicable workmanship provisions of the CBC. Architect and/or engineer reviewed shop drawings may be used only as an aid to inspection. CBC Section 1702 defines continuous special inspection as, "The full-time observation of work requiring special inspection by an approved special inspector who is present in the area where the work is being performed." CBC Section 1701.2 defines periodic special inspection as, "The part-time or intermittent observation of work requiring special inspection by an approved special inspector who is present in the area where the work has been or is being performed and at the completion of the work." The schedule for the periodic special inspections shall be in accordance with the approved construction documents and the pre-construction meeting.

6. Report nonconforming items

The special inspector, or registered design professional in responsible charge, shall bring nonconformance items to the immediate attention of the contractor and note all such items in the daily report. If any item is not resolved in a timely manner or is about to be incorporated in the work, the special inspector shall notify the Building Official by telephone or in person, and notify the professional in responsible charge of work prior to the completion of that phase of the work. Any work performed by the contractor or subcontractors following notification by the special inspector is "at risk" and will require subsequent approval by the Building Official.

7. Provide required reports

Each special inspector shall complete the Special Inspection Record form ([CNI-013](#)) for each day's inspections. This Special Inspection Record includes information regarding: Inspection type, name of special inspector, identification number, date, notes, and arrival/departure times. These records are to remain at the job site with the contractor for review by the Building Official. Additionally, the special inspector shall keep records of all inspections which shall indicate that the work performed was done in conformance to approved construction documents.

The special inspector or quality control firm shall submit a signed final report to the Building Official, pursuant to Section 1703.3. All materials' testing results and an itemized summation of the special inspections and structural observations performed shall be incorporated into this report. The final report shall specifically itemize all materials and construction not in conformance, unresolved items, or any discrepancies in inspection coverage (i.e., missed inspections, periodic inspections when continuous was required, etc.). Any unresolved items must be approved by the Building Official. The report must be signed and stamped by the appropriate professional, licensed by the State of California. **Final inspection of the structure will not be scheduled until the final report has been reviewed and approved by the Building Official.**

8. Contractor Responsibilities

- a. Quality control and code compliance. The contractor is primarily responsible for the quality of the work performed and compliance with code requirements. Each contractor responsible for the construction of a main seismic-force-resisting system, designated seismic system or a seismic-resisting component listed in the statement of special inspections shall submit a written statement of responsibility to the building official and the owner prior to the commencement of on the system or component. This contractor's statement can be found on the last page of the Statement of Special Inspections, CNI-033. This statement can be submitted for approval at the pre-construction meeting, but must be approved by the building official prior to the start of work on any such designated system. The Contractor's Statement of Responsibility shall contain the following:

- 1) Acknowledgment of awareness of the special requirements contained in the statement of special inspections;
 - 2) Acknowledgment that control will be exercised to obtain conformance with the construction documents approved by the building;
 - 3) Procedures for exercising control within the contractor's organization, the method and frequency of reporting and the distribution of the reports; and
 - 4) Identification and qualifications of the person(s) exercising such control and their position(s) in the organization.
- b. Inspector notification. The contractor is responsible for scheduling the required special inspection and/or testing services. Most companies that perform these services require a minimum of 24 hours notice prior to the required inspection and/or testing service is to be conducted. Sufficient lead time for the special inspector to review the construction documents and perform preparatory work shall also be provided at the job site.
 - c. Provide access to plans. The contractor is responsible for providing the special inspector access to approved construction documents at the job site.
 - d. Retain special inspection records. The contractor is responsible for retaining at the job site all special inspection records submitted by the special inspector(s) for review by the Building Inspector upon request.
 - e. Inspection and approval of work. The contractor shall not perform any work that requires special inspection without the presence of the inspector(s) during the performance of that work. **Work performed without special inspection shall be removed.**
 - f. Final inspection. The final inspection may not be scheduled until all reports documenting the special inspection work have been submitted and approved by the Building Official.
 - g. Construction Inspection Section approval. Approval of work by the special inspector does not relieve the contractor from obtaining Construction Inspection Section approval for inspections required per Section 109 of Appendix Chapter 1 of the CBC.

9. Owner's responsibilities

- a. Special Inspector employment. The owner or their agent(s) shall employ a sufficient number of qualified special inspectors to assure inspection without hindering the quality assurance of the work.
- b. Inspection continuity. It is recommended that the owner employ the same special inspection agencies throughout the job to assure continuity. All substitutions of special inspection agencies must have prior approval of the Building Official.
- c. Final Report. The owner or their agent(s) are responsible for submittal of a final signed report, including necessary test results, before a final inspection can be scheduled, per Section 1703.3 of the CBC.
- d. Preconstruction Meeting. If required by the Building Official, the owner or their agent(s), contractor, and registered design professional in responsible charge agrees to attend a preconstruction meeting with a representative of the Construction Inspection Section prior to permit issuance, or to the commencement of work. The meeting is to be arranged and scheduled per mutual agreement by the contractor.

10. **Registered design professional in responsible charge responsibilities:**

- a. Responsible to identify all construction methods that require Special Inspection prior to permit issuance.
- b. In accordance with Sections 106.3.4.1 & 109, Appendix Chapter 1 and structural observation requirements of 1709 of the CBC, the Building Official may require that the registered design professional in responsible charge attend a preconstruction meeting prior to the commencement of work. When structural observation is required by the Building Official, the registered design professional in responsible charge shall perform visual observation on the project at significant construction stages and at completion of the structural system (a minimum of three observations) to certify that the structure is constructed in accordance with the CBC, 2007 edition. The minimum observations are: foundation, structural frame (including seismic load resisting elements when required), and final. Additional observations may be required as the result of deficiencies or corrective actions or special circumstances as agreed upon in the pre-permit, or preconstruction meeting, stage of the project. Any observed deficiencies that have not been resolved, or changes to the approved plans must be brought to the attention of the building official as soon as possible (no more than three (3) working days), and before subsequent inspections. This observation is in addition to required special inspections and is not intended as a substitution of other required inspections. A final report similar to the one described in Item 8 of this procedure is to be submitted to the Building Official.