

# How to Become a Registered Special Inspector

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

## BLDG-17-1

November 2025

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This technical bulletin establishes the requirements and the process for becoming a registered special inspector with the City of San Diego. Inspectors performing special inspections as specified in Chapter 17 of the California Building Code are required to be registered by the City of San Diego. Registered inspectors are authorized to perform special inspections in their registration category.

## I. Special Inspection Registration Categories

The Development Services Department issues registrations in the following categories:

1. Reinforced Concrete.
2. Structural Masonry.
3. Prestressed Concrete.
4. Structural Steel and Bolting / Structural Welding.
5. Spray-applied Fireproofing.
6. Pile Driving (driven).
7. Structural Wood.
8. Exterior Insulation & Finish System (EIFS).
9. Firestopping.
10. Others (as required by the Building Official).

All special inspections must be performed per the provisions of the California Building Code and Standards as adopted by the City of San Diego.

## II. Qualification Requirements

- A. Refer to Table 1 for the minimum registration requirements, which include certification, additional requirements for each category, and the required education and experience points.
- B. Refer to Table 2 for points assigned by education and experience. Observe the minimum and maximum points required for each category.

## III. Application Submittal Requirements

Applicants shall apply online on the Development Services Department page. Fill out the [Application for Special Inspector Registration](#) (Form DS-320) completely. After completing the application, attach the documents listed below and click the "Submit and Sign" button in the form. The attachment button is a paper clip icon on the form's top left.

- A. Copy of updated resume, showing the experience and education, with a list of contact phone numbers.
- B. Proof of education and technical competence (not required for renewal of registration):
  - I. Copies of State, College, Trade school, or High school diplomas, degrees, or certificates related to the applied certifications.
  - II. Copies of transcripts may be submitted in lieu of diplomas or degrees.
- C. Proof of certification issued by the required International Code Council (ICC) and American Concrete Institute (ACI), when applicable, with a valid expiration date. All certifications shall be current and valid.
- D. A recent picture showing a clear face (without hats, masks, glasses, etc.) against a solid-colored background. A picture taken with a regular phone camera may be accepted, provided the image is sharp, clear, visible, distortion-free, and complies with the face requirements. Pictures not complying will be rejected. Pictures should be sent in JPG, JPEG, and PDF formats only.

## IV. Virtual or Phone Interview

After the application and documents are received and reviewed, a virtual or phone interview may be necessary to complete the review. An email will be sent to schedule a virtual or phone interview if needed. In-person interviews may be conducted once the office is open to the public.

## V. Renewal of Registration

The issued registration card is valid for three years or upon the adoption of a new California Building Code. Failure to renew any registration cards is a cause for suspension or revocation of the special inspector registration. Special inspection reports will not be accepted.

All renewal applications shall be submitted within six months of the expiration date. A registered inspector may not conduct any inspections with an expired registration. There is no time extension for renewal processing by the Department after the expiration date. Failure to complete the renewal of an expired license within six months after the expiration date constitutes abandonment of the registration card. The applicant will be required to submit as a new special inspector candidate.

## VI. Fees

The City Treasurer will invoice a non-refundable fee upon receiving the [Application for Special Inspector Registration](#) (Form DS-320). The invoice will be mailed and shall be paid by the due date marked on the invoice. Failure to pay will cause late fees and other penalties assessed by the City Treasurer and can cause delays or suspension of the application, registration, or renewal procedures.

This fee will be assessed for all the applied categories each time. It is not refundable whether the application and registration are approved or denied.

A new application is required for add-on categories, and new fees will be assessed.

Fee..... \$ 284.00

## VII. Communication and Change in Information

Every registered special inspector is requested to have Internet connectivity and maintain a current and valid e-mail address on file with the department. Please notify the department immediately if your mailing address, telephone number, or e-mail address has changed.

Information will be sent electronically to registered special inspectors periodically, and it is essential that you receive it. Such information will be emailed to the email address on file.

## VIII. Additional Information

For more information regarding the registration as a special inspector, contact:

- ✉ [specialinspections@sandiego.gov](mailto:specialinspections@sandiego.gov)
- 📍 City of San Diego Development Services Department  
Attn: Registered Special Inspector Program  
[7650 Mission Valley Road](#)  
San Diego, CA 92108
- ☎ 858-581-7111

**Table 1**  
Categories Requirements

Category	Required	Additional Requirements	Points
<b>Structural Masonry</b>	Required	N/A	8
<b>Structural Steel and Bolting / Structural Welding</b>	Required.	CWI certification (based on AWS D1.1) may substitute ICC Structural Welding (S2). High-strength bolting (S1) is required.	8
<b>Spray-applied Fire-Proofing</b>	Required	N/A	8
<b>Reinforced Concrete</b>	Required	ACI - Concrete Field Technician-Grade I	8
<b>Prestressed Concrete</b>	Required	City of San Diego Reinforced Concrete Special Inspector	8
<b>Pile-Driving (driven)</b>	N/A	City of Los Angeles-Department of Building and Safety (LADBS), Deputy Inspector card in the category of "Grading" (pier driven/pile)	0
<b>Structural Wood</b>	As noted.	One of the following is required: 1. A current and valid Deputy Inspector card issued by the City of Los Angeles-Department of Building & Safety (LADBS) in the category of "Wood Construction"; or 2. ICC Certification as a Building Inspector or Combination Inspector with a minimum of two years of experience performing journey-level carpentry; or 3. Minimum two years of employment as a Building Inspector or a Combination Inspector with a municipality (City, County, State); or 4. A Civil Engineer, Structural Engineer, or an Architect licensed to practice in the State of California with a minimum of two years of experience in structural design on wood construction.	8
<b>EIFS</b>	N/A	One of the following is required: 1. City of Los Angeles-Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) Deputy Inspector Card (in 'EIFS'); or 2. EIFS registration from a nationally recognized testing agency (such as AWCI-Association of the Wall & Ceiling Industry) as EIFS Industry Professional – CEP or EIFS Inspector – CEI. And certification as a qualified applicator for each approved product (if available).	0
<b>Fire-caulking/Firestopping</b>	N/A	One of the following is required: 1. IFC registration as a fire-stopping certified inspector (including the practical tests) 2. City of Los Angeles registration. 3. ICC Firestopping CLA	0

**Table 2**  
Points Assigned to Education and Experience

#	EDUCATION	POINTS
<b>A minimum of 3 points is required, and a maximum of 5 points is allowed.</b>		
1	Graduation from High School or a High School Equivalency Certificate	(3) Points
2	Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Degree in Geology, Engineering or Architecture (130 Semester units minimum).	(2) Points
3	Completion of a formal apprenticeship program in the category of work for which registration is requested (3 years minimum).	(2) Points
4	Graduation from an accredited Community or Junior College with an Associate Degree in Building Inspection, Building Technology, or Building/ Construction Engineering Technology (60 Semester units minimum).	(1.5) Points
5	Licensed Civil Engineer or Architect in the State of California	(3) points
6	Licensed Engineering Geologist in the State of California	(3) points <i>For Pile Driving Registration applicants only</i>
7	Employed as an on-site supervisor of construction work in the category for which registration is requested within the last ten years.	(1.5) points/Year
8	Employed as an apprentice and/or journeyman doing the category of work for which registration is requested within the last ten years.	(1.25) Points/Year, (0.75) points/Year for apprenticeship
9	Employed as a Laboratory Engineering /Field Technician by a recognized materials testing laboratory with a major portion of his/her work related to the category of work for which registration is requested within the last 10 years.	(1.25) Points/Year
10	Building Inspector with a recognized enforcing agency with a substantial portion of his/her inspection work performed in the category of work for which registration is requested within the last 10 years.	(1.25) Points/Year
11	Registered and has worked as a special inspector in other recognized jurisdictions in the category for which registration is requested within the last 10 years.	(2) Points/Year
12	Registered by the City of San Diego and worked as a special inspector in an inspection discipline other than that for which registration is requested within the last 10 years.	(2) Points/Year

**Note:** Subject to the limitations stated above, the experience categories may be combined to obtain the required total points needed to be considered for registration. Points cannot be accumulated in more than one experience category for any given period.

### Reference Table

- [San Diego Municipal Code](#)
- 2022 California Building Code - Chapter 17: Special inspections and tests
- [Technical bulletin TB-17-2](#) 📄 Duties of a registered special inspector
- [Technical bulletin TB-17-3](#) 📄 Off-site fabrication of building components
- [Technical bulletin TB-17-4](#) 📄 Special inspection requirements for structural welding
- [Technical Bulletin TB-17-5](#) 📄 Approval of Building Product Listing and Evaluation Agencies
- [Technical bulletin TB- 17-6](#) 📄 Testing and inspections for proof of compliance