

PLAN CHECK ENGINEER

Approved: June 2025

FLSA: Non-exempt

Unit: AFSCME



Definition
Under general direction, performs professional work in checking plans, calculations, specifications, technical reports, and other submittal documents for compliance with state and local building codes, ordinances, regulations and energy standards; receives and checks plans and designs for complex structures, new and remodeled commercial, industrial, and residential buildings to ensure compliance; assists inspectors, contractors, design professionals, and the public regarding construction requirements; performs related work as required.
Supervision received and exercised
Receives general supervision from the Building Official or Assistant Community Development Director - Building. Exercises direct supervision over the Plan Checker classification.
Class characteristics
This is a supervisory classification in the Community Development Department. Incumbents are required to demonstrate prior plan review experience and the ability to supervise programs, projects and staff within the Building Division. Successful performance requires a thorough knowledge of plan checking methods, and the ability to exercise sound independent judgment within established guidelines. This class is distinguished from the Plan Checker in that it is responsible for technical and functional supervision of lower-level staff and performs the more complex plan review and advanced duties of the series.
Examples of typical job functions (illustrative only)
<p>Management reserves the right to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Plans, organizes, assigns and reviews work of staff assigned; trains staff in work procedures; evaluates employee performance, counsels employees, and effectively recommends initial disciplinary action; assists in staff selection.Evaluates for compliance with requirements of applicable state and local codes and ordinances relative to building structure and architecture, and plumbing, mechanical, electrical, and energy systems.Uses digital plan review or other prescribed method to assist in the review of building plans and specifications and permit tracking software during the building permit process.Supervises and responsible for staff's review and processing of building plan check comments to ensure accuracy and consistency in application and interpretation of regulations and policies, and for compliance with requirements of state and local codes and ordinances relative to building structure and architecture, and plumbing, mechanical, electrical, and energy systems.Prepares plan check review comments relative to code requirements in a manner that is technically sufficient for the professional and fundamentally understandable by the owner or builder.Reviews staff's plan check comments to ensure consistency in interpretation and application of quality control standards.Provides expedited plan check services at the customer counter.Meets with design professional, owners, builders, and others to review and discuss plans, documents, and code requirements; performs field reviews as necessary.Works with other state and county departments, and other city staff and agencies to ensure a comprehensive, complete and accurate plan review.Identifies project data necessary for permit processing such as project valuations type of construction, use, quantity, building size and provides that information in an easily understandable format to permit processing staff.Communicates with field inspectors, permit technicians and other departments to gain additional knowledge on projects that might affect the permit process to coordinate project if needed.Prepares plan review reports, comment sheets, and correspondence noting plan deficiencies and building code enforcement issues; maintains records of plan checking activities.Refers to a variety of manuals, documents and books including California Building Standards Code and reference documents and ICC Research Reports.Responds to public inquiries over the telephone, email or at the counter concerning questions regarding permit processing, building, or other construction-related questions; assists applicants in achieving compliance with various codes and regulations.Participates in the development, monitoring and implementation of department initiatives.

- Stays abreast of code changes; researches and monitors changes in regulations and technology that may affect operations; implements policy and procedural changes after approval.
- Receives, investigates and responds to problems and complaints in a professional manner.
- Schedules consulting plan checkers to assist in the office when the workload is heavy.
- Performs related duties as required.

Qualifications

Knowledge of

- Principles, practices and methods of structural and building plan review.
- Practices for documenting plan checking procedures and correcting discrepancies.
- Civil engineering principles, techniques, policies, and procedures and their application
- Construction methods, materials, tools, and equipment used for complex residential, commercial, and industrial construction, and principles of structural engineering.
- Methods, materials, tools, and safety practices of the building, plumbing, and electrical trades.
- Applicable federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, and organizational policies and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility, including building, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, life safety, energy, and related codes.
- Legal processes and considerations involved in prosecuting violations of the building codes and ordinances.
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Techniques for effectively representing the County in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, various business, professional, educational and regulatory organizations, and with property owners, developers, contractors, and the public.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, contractors, engineers, architects, and City staff.
- Principles and requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance; California Energy Conservation requirements.
- Appropriate health and safety and fire prevention construction and building methods.
- Principles and practices of supervision and training and development of employees, including work planning, assignment, review and evaluation, and the training of staff in work procedures.
- Methods of effective supervision in a unionized environment.

Ability to

- Learn and interpret local laws, ordinances, requirements and regulation related to building inspection activities and operations.
- Learn departmental methods, practices, and procedures.
- Read and interpret building and construction plans, diagrams, and specifications.
- Use tact, discretion, initiative and independent judgement within established guidelines.
- Understand and follow complex oral and written instructions.
- Establish and maintain accurate logs and records.
- Perform required mathematical computations with accuracy.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and specialized software applications programs.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and legal guidelines in politically sensitive situations.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.
- Collect, interpret and analyze construction documentation and data accurately.
- Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with applicable State, and local laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.
- Perform complex technical plan reviews with limited supervision.
- Make sound, independent decisions within established policy and procedural guidelines.
- Evaluate, recommend and implement goals, objectives, and practices providing effective and efficient services.
- Plan, organize, assign, review, and evaluate work of staff; train staff in work procedures.
- Analyze, interpret, summarize, document and present administrative and technical information and data in an effective manner.
- Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner; organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical time deadlines.

Education and experience
Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equivalent to graduation from a four-year college or university with a degree in civil engineering or closely related field. • Four (4) to five (5) years of increasingly responsible experience as a plans examiner or building designer, one year of which needs to be in a supervisory capacity.
Licenses and certifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possession of a valid California driver's license and a satisfactory driving record. • Possession of a Plans Examiner Certificate issued by the International Conference of Building Officials, International Code Council, International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials, or National Inspection Testing Certification. • Possession of a Certificate of Registration as a professional engineer in the State of California.
Physical demands
Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various City and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 25 pounds.
Environmental elements
Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.