

Seismic Retrofit Property Owners Frequently Asked Questions

1. *How do I know if my building is included in the program?*

The City has prepared a list of buildings included in the program that will be required to complete a structural analysis. Inclusion of a building on the list is not confirmation that the building is structurally deficient, hazardous or unsafe.

Buildings owners will also receive a notice from the City that it is included in the program, with timelines for compliance. To verify if your property is included, [explore our searchable map](#).

2. *Does being on the List mean that my building is hazardous or vulnerable?*

No. Appearance on the List is the City's best analysis in identifying the building in one of the five major categories. Appearance on the List does not necessarily mean that your building is unsafe, or will require retrofit.

3. *How much time do I have to retrofit my building?*

Compliance timeframes are based on the type of building and begin from the date that you are issued a notice from the City. Notices will be issued between August 2017 and August 2018, based on the following priorities outlined in the [proposed noticing schedule](#):

- Priority 1: Unreinforced Masonry Buildings and Concrete Tilt-Up Buildings
- Priority 2: Soft-Story Buildings with 3 or more stories
- Priority 3: Soft-Story Buildings with 16 or more units
- Priority 4: Non-Ductile Concrete Buildings and Steel Moment Frame Buildings
- Priority 5: Soft-Story Buildings with 7 to 15 units
- Priority 6: Soft-Story Buildings with 6 or less units

Note: In all notices issued by the City to property owners, City will include actual compliance dates.

4. *If my building is on the List included in the program, what steps do I need to take to ensure compliance?*

Step 1: Complete a Structural Evaluation.

Step 2: Submit the Structural Evaluation to the City by the deadline provided in your notice and pay the review fee.

Step 3: Prepare and submit a retrofit plan to Building and Safety for plan check if the Building Officer determines that your building requires a seismic retrofit.

Step 4: If the building is a residential rental building, complete a Means and Methods plan and notify tenants in accordance with the City's *Tenant Protection During Construction* guidelines.

Step 5: Obtain construction permits.

Step 6: Complete the seismic retrofit.

5. *Who can complete a Structural Evaluation for me?*

A California licensed civil or structural engineer or registered architect must perform the structural analysis. Their subsequent report must report the findings and deficiencies of the building and their recommendation for a retrofit. These professionals may be found through several professional and government resources:

Registered Professional Licensed Engineers: <http://bpelsg.ca.gov>

Registered Architects: <http://cab.ca.gov>

Structural Engineering Association of So Cal: <http://www.seaosc.org/Find-an-Engineer>

6. *If the Structural Evaluation determines that a Retrofit is not required, am I done?*

The Evaluation still must be submitted to Building and Safety for review. If the Building Officer confirms that a Retrofit is not required, the City will issue you a letter acknowledging that your building is in compliance. At this time, no further work is required related to the retrofit program requirements.

7. *Will I get verification from the City after I complete the Seismic Retrofit of my building?*

After City Building inspectors have approved the completion of the work, the City will issue a "Certificate of Completion of Seismic Retrofit Work" for your records. All property information in the City's database will identify the property as being compliant with the 2017 Seismic Retrofit Program.

8. *Can I appeal an order that declares my building Potentially Seismically Vulnerable?*

Yes. After receiving an Order, it may be appealed by completing an Appeal Request Form within 60 days of the date on the Order. An appeal form will be included with the order. Appeals are heard by the Building and Fire-Life Safety Commission whose decision is final, except for judicial review. The Commission will decide on any Appeal within 90 days after the filing of the Appeal.

If your building is on the City's List of Potentially Vulnerable Buildings, and therefore scheduled to receive a notice, you may also [file for reconsideration](#) with the Building Officer.

To file for reconsideration, please contact the Building and Safety Division at 310-458-8355 or seismic@smgov.net.

Important Note: The reconsideration is an administrative review, which is intended to achieve a quick resolution when an owner has clear evidence that a building has either been retrofitted, or does not meet the conditions required to be included in the program.

To ensure that a determination can be completed within enough time to still meet compliance deadlines, you should provide copies of any documentation that verifies the retrofit and/or have a licensed engineer or registered architect write a letter stating that the building is in compliance or that it does not meet the characteristics established by

the Seismic Retrofit Ordinance as requiring evaluation. The letter of the licensed professional must bear the stamp and signature of this professional.

9. *My building was retrofitted soon after the 1994 earthquake, so I submitted a Request for Reconsideration form to the City. My request was not approved because the retrofit of my building utilized a “pole structure.” What does that mean??*

Pole structure retrofit designs were used fairly frequently after the 1994 Northridge earthquake. However, they were not explicitly defined in the building codes at that time as being retrofits that resist the side-to-side movement of a building during an earthquake. It is this side-to-side movement in an earthquake that is hazardous to soft story buildings, which is why the City does not exempt this type of retrofit design from the requirements of the Seismic Retrofit Program.

Pole structure designs are distinctly recognizable as a round or square hollow steel post/column extending vertically from the floor of the parking area and attaching to the wood frame of the unit directly above it. This steel post is secured to the ground by a rectangular concrete pad/footing that is clearly distinguishable from the surrounding concrete. Pole structure designs vary greatly, but please view this example of a [basic pole structure design](#) for an idea of what it looks like.

RESOURCES ON FINANCING PROGRAMS

- Program or Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE).

Information related to PACE may be found at:

https://www.smgov.net/Departments/OSE/Categories/Energy/PACE/PACE_Financing.aspx

- The California Seismic Safety Capital Access Loan Program (CalCAP)

CalCAP was established to assist small businesses and residential property owners with financing in the retrofit of existing qualified buildings. Information on this Program may be found at: <http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/cpcf/cap/calcap/seismic/summary.asp>