



Project Inspections

City of San Diego
Development Services Department

INFORMATION
BULLETIN
120

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This bulletin describes how to prepare for and schedule building inspections for projects within the City of San Diego. It also serves as a guide to inform customers of inspection issues and requirements that impact the overall inspection process and duration. Lastly, this bulletin describes options for Enhanced Inspections to facilitate projects through the inspection process. For a complete list of inspection types, refer to the City's Inspection Record Card (DS-1798).

I. PREPARING FOR INSPECTIONS

Please follow the instructions below when preparing for inspections:

- A.** An adult (minimum of 18 years old) must be present to allow access to the inspection site.
- B.** All household pets must be secured away from the construction site.
- C.** All construction that requires a permit must be inspected before it is covered or concealed.
- D.** If roof or attic access is required, a ladder approved by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) must be provided for the inspector. The ladder shall be set in place per OSHA standards.
- E.** Areas to be inspected shall have adequate illumination.
- F.** A safe path of travel shall be provided throughout the inspection site. Crawl spaces must be dry, free of obstruction (i.e., insects, rodents, etc.) and safe for inspectors.
- G.** All electrical panels and junction boxes shall be open and accessible for inspection. Inspectors will not open boxes or take apart electrical equipment.
- H.** If scaffolding is installed and necessary for access, scaffolding approved by OSHA must be provided for the inspector. The scaffolding shall be set in place, fastened, and secured per OSHA standards.
- I.** The following must be made available to the inspector, when applicable:
 - 1.** Approved plans.
 - 2.** Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) or Minor Water Pollution Control Plan (MWPCP) to verify implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) .
 - 3.** All manufacturer installation instructions.
 - 4.** Completed Electrical Circuit Card (DS-1779).
 - 5.** SDG&E service order request form for electrical service upgrades.
 - 6.** Special Inspection Reports (as identified on plans), including daily reports must be available on-site and final summaries when complete.
 - 7.** Final Special Inspection Reports must be delivered to the Inspection Services Office.

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Upon request, this information is available in alternative formats for persons with disabilities.

The inspector will perform the scheduled inspection and indicate on the Inspection Record Card (DS-1798), the approved plans, or Door Hanger Card (DS-1405) that the inspection was approved.

Work that fails an inspection will result in the issuance of a Correction Notice (DS-13) or a Storm Water Correction Notice (DS-3) for storm water violations. All non-compliant work must be corrected and remain accessible until the work passes inspection.

II. STORM WATER INSPECTIONS

Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) are required to be in place for all projects to prevent the discharge of pollutants from entering the storm water conveyance system. Failure to implement proper BMPs may result in an escalated enforcement action, including but not limited to a hold on inspections, an Administrative Citation in the amount of \$1,000 per incident for multiple violations, or a Civil Penalty & Order in the amount of \$10,000 per day per violation for total disregard of BMPs, or a Stop Work Order for discharges or other significant violations.

III. PRE-CONSTRUCTION MEETING

A pre-construction meeting (pre-con) may be required as determined through the plan review process, and as noted on the approved plans. Pre-cons shall be attended by the general contractor or point of contact, project design professionals, the building inspector, and other City staff, as necessary. The applicant shall schedule all required pre-cons prior to commencement of work. The following is a list of typical projects that may require a pre-con.

A. Storm Water

High priority construction BMP storm water projects, including projects located within the Area of Special Biological Significance (ASBS). The purpose of the pre-con is to review the construction BMPs, the storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP), and/or rain event action plan to clarify requirements.

B. Demolition

Prior to demolition (demo) activities to verify BMP requirements. The demo pre-con is normally scheduled by Inspection Services within two (2) business days from the date of permit issuance. In the event an inspection is not scheduled, it is the applicant's responsibility to schedule this inspection prior to commencement of work.

C. Coastal

Remodel of existing structures within the coastal overlay zone. The purpose of the pre-con is to review the project plans for consistency with on-site conditions, measure the exterior walls, and clarify requirements. This inspection must be scheduled prior to any changes to the existing walls. Failure to schedule a pre-con could result in major delays and additional permit requirements, such as a coastal development permit.

IV. SCHEDULING AND CANCELING INSPECTIONS

Unless otherwise noted on the Inspection Record Card, all building inspections can be scheduled or cancelled online, through the City's automated phone line, or by contacting Inspection Services. A permit or approval number is required for scheduling inspections. Remember to communicate any special instructions (i.e., gate access codes, meeting location, phone numbers, etc.) to the inspector ahead of time.

A. Online Scheduling

Online scheduling can be accessed through <https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/opensds>. The FAQ section of the web page will guide customers on how to schedule inspections online.

B. Automated Phone Line

The automated phone line of (858) 581-7111 is available to our customers 24 hours a day seven days a week. For inspections to be scheduled on the next available business day, requests shall be made no later than **11:59** p.m. the night before the inspection date.

C. Inspection Services Office

To schedule inspections directly with office staff, contact (858) 581-7111 and press zero (0) between 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, except weekends and scheduled holidays.

D. Canceling Inspections

Canceling inspections may be done online or through the automated phone line. However, canceling inspections on the day they are scheduled can only be done by contacting Inspection Services during regular business hours at (858) 492-5070.

V. LANDSCAPE INSPECTIONS

To schedule or cancel landscape inspections, contact the landscape inspector at (619) 980-7208 and be ready to provide a project number. All landscaping and irrigation work must be completed at the time the inspection is scheduled. Customers shall provide two (2) business days advance notice to process their request.

VI. REQUESTING A "TIME FRAME" FOR SCHEDULED INSPECTIONS

Please follow the instructions below to receive a two (2) hour time frame for a scheduled inspection:

A. Automated Phone Line

The automated phone line of (858) 581-7111 is available to our customers 24 hours a day seven days a week. After the system confirms a scheduled inspection, please stay on the line to receive the name and phone number of the assigned inspector. On the day of scheduled inspection, contact the inspector no later than 8:00 a.m. to receive a time frame for the inspection. The inspector will contact the customer the morning of the scheduled inspection no later than 10:00 a.m. to provide an estimated time of arrival.

B. Online Scheduling

Online scheduling can be accessed through <https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/opensd>. A time frame may be obtained online by leaving a contact number under the "Comments for Inspectors" section of the request. The inspector will contact the customer the morning of the scheduled inspection no later than 10:00 a.m. to provide an estimated time of arrival.

VII. INSPECTIONS "UNAVAILABLE"

During the inspection scheduling process, the customer may encounter inspections that will be listed as unavailable. There are various reasons why inspections are listed as unavailable. Typical reasons may include, but are not limited to the following:

A. Permit has not been issued.

B. Outstanding invoices.

C. Dependent approvals have not been cleared.

D. Prerequisite inspections have not been scheduled or approved.

E. Inspection issues have not been cleared. An administrative hold or stop work order has been issued.

For assistance in resolving any of the above-referenced issues, contact Inspection Services during regular business hours M - F. 7:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. at (858) 492-5070.

VIII. "CUSTOMER REQUEST" INSPECTIONS

"Customer Request" inspections may be offered through the automated phone line. If a Customer Request inspection is the only available inspection, this means regular inspections are unavailable. If a Customer Request inspection is scheduled, the inspector will need to determine why regular inspections are unavailable. The inspector will determine if the inspection can be performed. If the inspection cannot be performed, the inspector will inform the customer of the issues that shall be addressed prior to continuing inspections.

IX. CONSTRUCTION CHANGES

Construction changes are required when the approved plans and specifications are modified during the construction process. All construction changes shall be reviewed and approved by the City prior to being incorporated into the construction documents, and included with the issued Building Permit. Note that construction changes may delay the inspection process since the proposed changes will require approval prior to the continuation of inspections. For more information regarding construction changes, refer to Information Bulletin 118, "How to Process Construction Changes to Approved Plans."

X. DEFERRED SUBMITTALS

Deferred submittals are defined as those portions of the design (i.e., fire systems, metal stairs, trusses, etc.) that are not required to be submitted to the City at the time of the application, and are later submitted within a specified period. Since plans for deferred submittals require approval prior to installation, the timely submittal of deferred portions of the project is essential to avoid any delays during the inspection process. For more information regarding deferred submittals, refer to Information Bulletin 188, "Deferred Submittals."

XI. PERMIT EXPIRATION AND EXTENSIONS

For information regarding permit expiration and extensions, refer to Information Bulletin 117, "Building Permit Expiration and Extension."

XII. ENHANCED INSPECTIONS

Enhanced inspections are subject to additional fees, except the Virtual Inspection option which is free of additional charge if performed during normal business hours. If a Virtual Inspection is requested during non-business hours, additional fees apply. Refer to Section XVI (A) of this information bulletin for related inspection fees. Enhanced Inspections can be scheduled by completing and submitting form DS-167. All requests shall be submitted to the inspection office a minimum of one business day in advance, except as noted below. Inspector work hours are 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 pm.

A. Guaranteed Next Day Inspection

Inspection guaranteed to be completed during regular business hours on the day selected. Limit of 1/2 hour, (30 minutes) per inspection. You cannot specify a time.

B. Before/After Hours Inspections

Inspections immediately before or after the inspector's regular work day, with a maximum inspection time of two hours. Subject to inspector availability.

C. Late Nights, Weekends/Holidays

Inspections that need to be performed late nights, weekends or during scheduled holidays for a maximum of 2 hours. Provide at least two business days advance notice. Subject to inspector availability.

D. Virtual Inspections (VI)

Inspections performed via Camera/Video limited to the following inspection types:

1. Electric vehicle charging stations*
2. Drywall*
3. Exterior siding*
4. Insulation
5. Light standard footing
6. Minor framing/shear*
7. Re-roof*
8. Reinspection with minor corrections
9. Retaining wall footings*
10. Rooftop and ground-mount photovoltaic systems*
11. Foundation retrofits, including mobile homes*
12. Gas air test*
13. Shower pans and tubs*
14. Simple heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) change-outs*
15. Slab grades*
16. Temporary power poles
17. Trash enclosures
18. Water heaters*
19. Water service and re-pipes*
20. Window and door replacements*
21. Exterior lath*
22. Interior lath*
23. Wall furnace installation*

*For SFR/Duplex permit types only.

XIII. SPECIAL INSPECTIONS

Special inspections as documented on the approved plans are required to be performed in accordance with the provisions of the California Building Code. For work that requires special inspections, the applicant shall retain special inspectors registered by the City to perform the required special inspections. Note that special inspections are in addition to City inspections, and are not a substitute.

Special inspectors are responsible for preparing special inspection reports for the project. All reports must be submitted to the City inspector for review prior to the applicable inspection. The timely submittal of special inspection reports is essential to avoid any future delay in the inspection process. For more information, refer to Information Bulletin 320, "How to Become Registered as an Approved Special Inspector."

XIV. CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

A Certificate of Occupancy is issued upon final approval of all inspections for new buildings and existing buildings that involve a change of occupancy classification (except single family or duplex structures). For more information regarding COOs, refer to Information Bulletin 585, "Certificate of Occupancy."

XV. GUARANTEED SECOND OPINION

customers that question an inspection result can request a second opinion from the supervisor. Second opinions can be requested through the City inspector or by contacting Inspection Services at (858) 492-5070.

XVI. INSPECTION FEES

For applicable inspection fees, refer to Information Bulletin 501, "Fee Schedule, Construction Permits - Structures" and/or Information Bulletin 103, "Fee Schedule and/or Worksheet for Mechanical, Plumbing/Gas, Electrical."

The City accepts payments by cash, check, debit card, Visa or Master credit cards. Checks shall be made in the exact amount, drawn on US banks, and made payable to the "City Treasurer." Payments can be made online from a personal device, or in person at the Development Services office located at 1222 First Avenue. Note that the Inspection Services office in Kearny Mesa does not accept payments in person.

A. Re-Inspection Fees

A re-inspection fee may be assessed for an inspection or re-inspection. Typical reasons may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. An inspection has been requested for incomplete work.
2. Corrections previously noted have not been made.
3. Work has been concealed without inspection approval.
4. Access is not provided on the date the inspection is requested.
5. The inspection record card or approved plans are not available to the inspector.

If re-inspection fees are assessed, additional inspections will not be performed until the required fees have been paid in full.

B. Refunds

Inspection fee refunds are not granted where a year or more has elapsed since permit issuance, or where work has started and inspections have been performed. For more information regarding refunds, refer to Refund Application Form (DS-721).

Documents Referenced In This Information Bulletin

- Inspection Correction Notice, DS-13
- Storm Water Correction Notice, DS-3
- Inspection Record Card, [DS-1798](#)
- Inspection Circuit Card, [DS-1779](#)
- Door Hanger Card, DS-1405
- Refund Application Form, [DS-721](#)
- Request for Extended Inspection form, [DS-167](#)
- [Information Bulletin 103](#), Fee Schedule & Worksheet for Mechanical, Plumbing, Gas & Electrical
- [Information Bulletin 117](#), Building Permit Extension and Expiration
- [Information Bulletin 118](#), How to Process Construction Changes to Approved Plan
- [Information Bulletin 188](#), Deferred Submittals
- [Information Bulletin 320](#), How to Become Registered as an Approved Special Inspector
- [Information Bulletin 501](#), Fee Schedule, Construction Permits—Structures
- [Information Bulletin 585](#), Certificate of Occupancy
- [San Diego Municipal Code](#)