

Per the Building Official & Code Interpretations

Planning Building & Transportation
2263 Santa Clara Ave., Rm. 190
Alameda, CA 94501
510.747.6800
Hours: 7:30-3:30, Mon-Thur

Mechanical

- **AC Condenser Setbacks:** The City of Alameda has no setback requirements. Follow the manufactures instructions. Do not block the only 3' egress path from the rear yard to the front right of way. See our AC handout for more details.
- **Crawl Space Furnace:** A new furnace in a crawl space or basement with < 2 x 10" joists requires ½" gypsum board on the underside of the crawl space floor joists for the entire home. **Per the Building Official**, only the footprint of the room above the furnace is required to be rocked. Like for like in the same location is exempt. Gypsum board must be moisture resistant or painted. [CRC 302.13](#)
- **Mini-Split Disconnect:** An electrical disconnect (2 pole motor switch typically) for each interior unit shall be provided within sight of each unit (adjacent to the unit in each room is adequate. The requirement that it be readily accessible is not enforced). See our AC handout for more details. [CEC 440.14 & CMC 903.2.7](#)

Plumbing

- **EQ Valves:** Required to be installed with all gas line modifications. See our EQ valve handout for more details.
- **Below Ground Copper Piping:** Copper piping is not allowed under slabs with a building above (sleeved is acceptable). Alameda has wet acidic soil that eats through copper pipe.
- **Plumbing Fixtures:** The code requires all plumbing fixtures to be upgraded to the current flow rate requirements even if those fixtures are not modified. **Example:** remodel one bathroom, code requires all bathrooms, kitchen, and laundry fixtures to be brought to the current code. This is not enforced in Alameda. Only the bathroom being remodeled is required to be code compliant.
- **Water Heaters:** See water heater handout for special allowances regarding temperature and pressure relief valves that cannot gravity drain to the exterior.

Electrical

- **Romex:** Non Metallic Sheathed Cable must be protected in crawl spaces ≥ 36 " tall, garages and utility rooms. Romex cannot be subject to physical damage. **CEC 334**
- **Services:** Residential service panels must be EUSERC compliant. See handout for all service related requirements.
- **Services:** No LBs or gutters between the panel & the weather-head. **AMP requirement**
- **Services:** No gate between the street & the meter. **AMP requirement**
- **Services:** The water main bond is required to be outside and accessible – if possible. **AMP requirement**
- **Service Meter Height:** **AMP requirement**
 - 48-66"
 - 72-75" on driveway
- **Battery Storage Systems:** Requires AMP inspection prior to building inspection. This is to verify the battery system is not backfeeding the grid. See our ESS handout for more details. **AMP requirement**
- **Egress Lighting:** Track lighting or other easily removable lighting fixtures cannot be used for emergency egress lighting.
- **Subpanels:** You can add circuits to an existing non-compliant panel (in a closet) without moving the panel to a compliant location. Swapping out the panel requires code compliance. New circuits may require AFCI compliance.
- **Subpanels:** You can move a panel out of a closet to the same general area without upgrading the entire house to current AFCI code.

Kitchen Upgrades

- **AFCI:** AFCI protection is only required with new or modified circuits. The Building Official has deemed "*modification of a circuit*" as modification to the conductors.
- You can replace cabinets without a permit, like for like.
- You can replace countertops without a permit, like for like.
- You can replace a dishwasher, disposer, sink, range, oven, hood, and refrigerator without a permit (without modification to the electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems and returned to the same location).
- All new or modified circuits are required to conform to the current code.
- Removal of Sheetrock (kitchen gut) requires a permit, and complete electrical upgrade to the current code.
- **Kitchen Sink Drain:** An existing 1.5" drain line can remain as long as it is not modified.
- See our kitchen handout for more details.

Bathroom Upgrades

- **Curbless Shower:** The shower pan liner must extend $\geq 2'$ into the bathroom (splash zone).
- **Shower Drain:** The existing 1.5" shower waste can remain if the drain line is inaccessible. Replace the fouling chamber with a 2" line, the 1.5" trap must remain so a plumber knows which size snake to use when clearing an obstruction.
- **Bathroom Remodel:** A bathroom fan is not required to be added during a remodel unless a plumbing fixture is added.
- **20 amp Receptacle:** If the wall is opened $\leq 3'$ from the bathroom sink, or, if the conductors are modified, then the bathroom electrical circuit will have to be brought to the current code.
- **20 amp Receptacle:** Upgrading the circuit is not required when replacing a like for like fan or light fixture.
- **Tempered Glazing:** Aftermarket film is not a substitute for tempered glazing. With a like for like bathroom remodel, the existing non safety glazing can remain. Window replacement requires compliance to the current code.
- See our bathroom handout for more details.

General

- **Egress Bedroom Windows:** Homes constructed prior to 1942 or on the Historic List requires a window net opening of ≥ 3.3 sq. ft. & 18" x 18" & $< 44"$ from the finished floor to the sill.
- **New Construction/Additions Adjacent to Property Lines:** Homeowners and their agents are solely responsible for representing property line setbacks accurately on the Site Plan. For all new proposed habitable space (R-2 & R-3 occupancies), a survey from a CA licensed surveyor / civil engineer must be made available to the building inspector when constructing less than 6' from a property line. The survey must explicitly designate discernable reference markers for field measurements.
- **Smoke Detectors:** All smoke detectors are now required to be interconnected regardless of the scope of the remodel. This is not enforced in Alameda. See our smoke detector handout for more details.
- **Permit Expiration:** Building permits are good for 1 year. The 1 year time period resets after every "Approved" inspection.
- **Pergolas and Gazebos:** Permits required if > 120 sq. ft.
- **Exterior Landscaping Stairs:** Permits are not required for exterior landscaping stairs that do not service the building and are not part of the required egress path from the rear yard to a public right of way.

Forms & Handouts Page: <https://www.alamedaca.gov/Departments/Planning-Building-and-Transportation/Permit-Center/FormsHandoutsVer2>