



Building and Safety Permit Service Center

This guideline is intended to enhance local consistency in application and enforcement of the California Building and Residential Codes. Application of this guideline is project specific and does not authorize any violation of local or state code, ordinance or law in conjunction with the proposed work.

Voluntary seismic strengthening work must improve seismic safety as set forth in this guideline and Berkeley Municipal Code Section 7.52.060.

*[ABAG Standard Plan Set A](#) is available on the City of Berkeley Website.

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Guidelines for VOLUNTARY SEISMIC WALL BRACING AND ANCHORAGE

Qualified Seismic Work for Transfer Tax Reduction

In order to qualify for the City of Berkeley transfer tax Seismic Retrofit Rebate Program, voluntary seismic strengthening of cripple walls and sill plate anchorage of light, wood frame residential buildings shall meet or exceed one of the following standards:

1. [ABAG Standard Plan Set A](#) when applicable (per chart on Plan Set A)*
2. Appendix Chapter A3 of the current California Existing Building Code
3. Plans (and calculations) prepared by a California registered design professional, and meeting one of the following standards:
 - a. A design based on forces equal to 75 percent of those required by Chapter 16 of the current California Building Code
 - b. A design based on forces equal to those required by Chapter 23 of the 1976 Uniform Building Code

The provisions of the [ABAG Standard Plan Set A](#) and California Existing Building Code (CEBC) Appendix Chapter A3 do not apply to the buildings, or elements thereof, listed below. These buildings or elements require analysis by a registered design professional in accordance with CEBC A301.3 to determine appropriate strengthening:

1. Buildings with a lateral force-resisting system using poles or columns embedded in the ground.
2. Cripple walls that exceed 4 feet in height.
3. Buildings exceeding three stories in height and any three-story building with cripple wall studs exceeding 14 inches in height.
4. Buildings where the code official determines that conditions exist that are beyond the scope of the prescriptive requirements of this chapter.
5. Buildings or portions thereof constructed on concrete slabs on grade.

Voluntary Seismic Work NOT for Transfer Tax Reduction

When voluntary seismic strengthening is not for Transfer Tax Reduction the work may comply with any of the following standards above. Structural alterations that are intended exclusively to improve the lateral force-resisting system and are not required by code are permitted in accordance with CEBC 503.13, provided that documentation is submitted demonstrating the following:

1. The capacity of existing structural systems to resist forces are not reduced.
2. New structural elements are detailed and connected to existing or new structural elements as required for new construction.
3. New or relocated nonstructural elements are detailed and connected to existing or new structural elements as required for new construction.
4. The alteration do not create a structural irregularity as defined in ASCE 7 or make an existing structural irregularity more severe.