
PROCEDURE: REQUEST FOR ALTERNATE DESIGN, MATERIALS AND METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION

Division of the State Architect (DSA) documents referenced within this publication are available on the [DSA Forms](#) or [DSA Publications](#) webpages.

PURPOSE: California Administrative Code (CAC), California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 1, section 4-304 permits alternate design, materials and methods of construction, hereafter referred to as alternate means, to be utilized. This procedure provides guidance on applying for and documenting a request to utilize alternate means of construction to achieve code compliance affecting Structural Safety and/or Fire and Life Safety conditions.

BACKGROUND: Cases arise during design or construction where strict conformance with the California Building Standards Code cannot be achieved, and an equivalent design method, alternate material or alternate method of construction is needed.

SCOPE: This Procedure outlines the requirements for submitting a request to use alternate materials or methods of construction for projects submitted to DSA.

1. REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ALTERNATE MEANS REQUEST

1.1 Application for Approval

1.2 Prior to Submittal for Plan Review: Where the design presents known challenges or obstacles and a request for alternate means request will be utilized, the design proposal is to be submitted to DSA for approval and authorization prior to incorporation into the design documents. At no time may a proposed alternate lessen any fire protection requirements or any degree of structural integrity.

1.2.1 Equivalency: The request must include the information necessary to demonstrate that the means is at least equivalent to the requirements of the California Building Code (CBC) in the areas of suitability, strength, effectiveness, fire resistance, durability, safety, and sanitation.

1.2.2 Documentation: The request must be accompanied by a completed form *DSA 1-AMM: Request for Alternate Design, Materials & Methods of Construction* and include applicable plans, specifications, associated construction details, manufacturer's cut sheets, recognized evaluation reports, and supplementary calculations as necessary to comply with paragraph 1.2.1.

1.3 During Construction: Where difficulties arise during construction and an alternate material or method of construction is necessary, the request must comply with paragraphs 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 above, and be submitted to DSA for review through the Construction Change Document (CCD) process, using form *DSA 140: Application for Approval of Construction Change Document – CCD Category A/B*. (See *DSA IR A-6: Construction Change Document Submittal and Approval Process*.)

2. SUBMITTAL REVIEW: Requests to utilize an alternate means are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and are applicable only to the specific project for which

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submitted. Requests approved and authorized by DSA shall be incorporated into the original project plans or CCD, and a note specifying the alternate materials or methods shall be denoted on the plans and/or specifications. A completed and signed copy of the request (form DSA 1-AMM) once approved by DSA is to be maintained in the project file.

3. **INSPECTION:** Alternate materials and construction methods approved on the project plans shall be subject to inspection during construction by the DSA-certified project inspector in accordance with section 4-333(b), Part 1, CAC. Use of alternate materials and methods of construction may be subject to special testing and inspection requirements in accordance with section 4-333(c), Part 1, CAC.

A DSA Procedure documents a process or series of steps that DSA staff and/or external stakeholders must complete in order to fulfill one or more administrative requirements of DSA's review and approval of plans and specifications and construction oversight programs.