
PARTIAL DEMOLITION

Disciplines: Structural, Fire and Life Safety,
Accessibility

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

PURPOSE

This Interpretation of Regulation (IR) clarifies acceptable methods for achieving compliance with applicable building codes and regulations related to partial demolition performed on construction projects under DSA's jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

California Administrative Code (CAC), Section 4-312 requires DSA approval prior to the start of demolition work "for any partial demolition of existing buildings or any demolition which is part of a reconstruction, rehabilitation, alteration or addition." (See CAC, § 4-312 for requirements for demolition of an entire school building.)

Partial demolition of a building or demolition work as part of a reconstruction, rehabilitation, alteration, or addition has the potential to remove elements which are critical to the structural integrity, fire and life safety function and accessibility of the building.

POLICY

Approval by DSA is required for any partial demolition of existing buildings or any demolition which is part of a reconstruction, rehabilitation, alteration or addition. Partial demolition includes, but is not limited to, the removal of wall or ceiling framing coverings (gypsum board, plaster and stucco), any structural elements, any fire and life safety components, doors, windows, roofing, skylights, mechanical equipment and ductwork.

If the scope of partial demolition includes removing accessible features and/or facilities which serve areas of the building not being demolished, or other buildings not being demolished, then establishing alternate accessible features and/or facilities to those being removed must be included in the scope of the project.

If the scope of partial demolition obstructs an accessible path of travel to buildings and/or areas not being demolished, then establishing an alternate accessible path of travel to those buildings and/or areas must be included in the scope of the project. (See California Building Code, § 11B-202.4.)

EXEMPTIONS

Partial demolition work related to the following projects is exempt from DSA review:

- Partial demolition for the purpose of fire damage repair may proceed prior to submitting the fire damage repair project to DSA for approval.
- Asbestos abatement work limited to removing insulation and flooring materials.
- Removal of lead-based paint or other hazardous finish surface materials which do not compromise a fire-resistance-rated assembly (e.g., removal of sheathing material from studs or joists).
- Projects in which the full scope of work is exempt from DSA review by all disciplines (structural safety, fire and life safety and access compliance) in accordance with the requirements of *IR A-22: Construction Projects and Items Exempt From DSA Review*.

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SUBMITTAL

Plans—including partial demolition of existing buildings or any demolition which is part of a reconstruction, rehabilitation, alteration or addition—shall be submitted to DSA for approval. With concurrence of DSA, partial demolition work performed as part of a project may be submitted for review as an increment in accordance with *IR A-11: Incremental Submittals*. As a means of complying with the IR A-11 requirement that the scope of work included in an increment be complete and code compliant even if other increments are not constructed, the district shall submit a letter stating the building(s) will not be occupied once demolition begins until the entire scope of the project is complete.

REFERENCES:

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 24
Part 1: California Administrative Code (CAC), Section 4-312

This IR is intended for use by DSA staff and by design professionals to promote statewide consistency for review and approval of plans and specifications as well as construction oversight of projects within the jurisdiction of DSA, which includes State of California public schools (K–12), community colleges and state-owned or state-leased essential services buildings. This IR indicates an acceptable method for achieving compliance with applicable codes and regulations, although other methods proposed by design professionals may be considered by DSA.

This IR is subject to revision at any time. Please check DSA's website for currently effective IRs. Only IRs listed on the webpage at <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/dsa/publications> at the time of project application submittal to DSA are considered applicable.