



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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MANDATORY SEISMIC RETROFIT OF SOFT-STORY BUILDINGS  
ORDINANCE NO. 18-O-2767

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**1. What is a soft-story wood-frame building?**

A soft story building is one with soft, weak or open-front walls on one or more sides of the first story. These buildings typically have tuck-under parking and storage with one story of habitable units above or they have a wall that has mostly door or window openings with a very low percentage of structural wall framing in between.

**2. What is retrofit?**

Retrofit is an improvement of the seismic lateral force resisting system by alteration of the existing structural elements or addition of new structural elements.

**3. What is Tuck-Under Parking?**

This type of parking is parking beneath the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

**4. What is this program about?**

This program requires the retrofit of all multi-family wood-frame buildings that contain a soft story condition. These buildings are susceptible to strong damage in an earthquake because of a weakness found in the buildings lower story. This program seeks to strengthen those buildings and our city.

**5. What are the benefits of performing a seismic upgrade?**

Performing a seismic upgrade of a soft story building will reduce the risk of death or injury that may result from the effects of earthquakes. The retrofit ordinance creates minimum standards intended to mitigate the risk of collapse and improve the performance of these buildings during earthquakes.

## 6. How was the list of affected properties created?

The list was created from a field visual survey and permits records research performed to identify existing potentially vulnerable wood-frame soft-story buildings in multi-family residential zones of City of Beverly Hills.

## 7. What is the scope of this program?

This program applies to all existing multi-family buildings of wood-frame construction, or wood-frame portions thereof, where:

1. A permit for Construction of a new building was applied for before January 1, 1978, or if no permit can be located, the structure is determined by the City Building Official to have been built under building code standards enacted prior to January 1, 1978, and
2. The ground floor or basement portion of the structure contains parking or other similar open floor space that causes Soft, Weak, or Open-Front Wall lines and there exists one or more stories above.

## 8. When will I receive my order to comply?

Each property owner of these buildings will be sent a Notice to Comply. These orders will be sent accordingly based on the following priority:

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Description</b>
Priority I.	Buildings with 3 or more stories
Priority II.	Buildings with 2 stories, with 6 or more units
Priority III.	Buildings not falling within the definition of Priority I or II.

## 9. What do I need to do first?

The property owner must hire an engineer or architect licensed in the state of California to complete and submit Screening Form (available to be downloaded at:

<http://www.beverlyhills.org/softstory> or may be obtained at the Community Development Counter at City Hall), and evaluate the strength of the building. The engineer or architect must then develop plans for the building's seismic strengthening in compliance with this program.

## 10. How do I find an Engineer?

Please visit the State of California's Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists and/or Structural Engineers Association of Southern California (SEAOSC) websites for information regarding licensed engineers (please use links below):

<http://bpelsg.ca.gov>.

<https://seaosc.org/Member-Services-Search>

## 11. How do I find an Architect?

Please visit the California Architects Board for information regarding licensed architects:  
<http://cab.ca.gov>

## 12. How do I find a Contractor?

Please visit the Contractors State License Board for information regarding hiring a contractor and to verify if a contractor is licensed and insured: <http://cslb.ca.gov>.

## 13. What can I do if I believe that my building is not subject to the ordinance or has had a previous retrofit?

The first step of the retrofit process is to complete a Screening Form. The Screening Form is intended to provide additional information to determine if a building is in the scope of the ordinance and a retrofit is required or if the building is exempt from further evaluation. The report must be completed by a Professional Engineer or Architect licensed by the State of California and will need to be submitted to the Community Development Department for review and approval.

If it is determined that the building is exempt, (with supporting documentation and proof of previous retrofits), no further action is necessary and the building will be removed from the list of buildings requiring a seismic retrofit.

## 14. What do I do next?

Retrofit plans and structural calculation with a completed permit application shall be submitted to the Community Development Department (CDD) for review. Email the completed permit application to [cdpermits@beverlyhills.org](mailto:cdpermits@beverlyhills.org).

All the plan review submittal must be made electronically through Beverly Hills Electronic Review portal. For more information, use link below: <http://www.beverlyhills.org/eplan>.

The following standard forms and documents shall be completed and permanently attached to the beginning of plans (scanned to the plans):

Document	Link to Document
Inspection Record	<a href="http://www.beverlyhills.org/DSPINSP-001">www.beverlyhills.org/DSPINSP-001</a>
General Notes	<a href="http://www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-001">www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-001</a>
Agreement to Provide Digital-Format Plans	<a href="http://www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-002">www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-002</a>
Pre-Construction Meeting Topics	<a href="http://www.beverlyhills.org/DSPINSP-002">www.beverlyhills.org/DSPINSP-002</a>
Storm Water - Best Management Practices - General Plan Notes	<a href="http://www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-003">www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-003</a>
Erosion and Sediment Controls	<a href="http://www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-004">www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-004</a>
Construction Management Plan	<a href="http://www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-005">www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-005</a>
Structural Observation Program	<a href="http://www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-006">www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-006</a>
Construction Means and Method Plan	<a href="http://www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-007">www.beverlyhills.org/DSP-007</a>

It should be noted that prior to permit issuance, a “Means and Method Plan for Tenant Protection During Construction” identifying timelines, impacts to tenants, and proposed mitigations shall be submitted to Rent Stabilization Division (email to [bhrent@beverlyhills.org](mailto:bhrent@beverlyhills.org)) for review and approval prior to issuance of building permit.

**15. What are the time limits to comply?**

If the screening form concludes the structure is within the scope of this Article, the structure shall be strengthened to comply with the standards of this Article within the time periods shown in Table below:

<b>Required Action by Owner</b>	<b>Submit Screening Form</b>	<b>Submit Retrofit Plans</b>	<b>Obtain Building Permit</b>	<b>Commence Construction</b>	<b>Complete Construction</b>
<b>Retrofit</b>	6 Months from date the notice is served to the owner	1 Year from date the notice is served to the owner	2 years from date the notice is served to the owner	2.5 years from date the notice is served to the owner	3 years from date the notice is served to the owner

**16. What do I do after a permit is issued?**

Begin construction and request inspections online using our Online Services.

**17. What should I submit to City for plan review and obtain a permit?**

The plans (Architectural and Structural plans), structural calculation and specifications shall be of sufficient clarity to indicate the nature, design methodology, and extent of the proposed work and to show in detail that it will conform to the provisions of the retrofit ordinance and other applicable sections of the Building Code.

**18. How do I schedule for inspection?**

To obtain information on how to request for inspection, please use the link below to City of Beverly Hills building inspection webpage:

<http://www.beverlyhills.org/business/developmentconstruction/buildinginspection/?NFR=1>

**19. Are there any incentives for the retrofit of soft-story buildings?**

Projects that are completed within 18 and 24 months from the date of Notice To Comply, could receive a 100% and 50% refund of the permit fees, respectively.

**20. What happens if a building owner does not comply with the soft story retrofit ordinance?**

It shall be unlawful for person or business entity receiving the “Notice To Comply” order to;

(i) fail to comply with any of the time limits and requirements including bringing the affected structure into full compliance with the minimum seismic standards specified in the Ordinance;

and/or

(ii) maintain, use or occupy any such structure that has not been brought into full compliance within the time limits set forth in the Ordinance.

Any person who violates or causes or permits another person to violate this Ordinance is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be subject to prosecution and/or administrative enforcement under the City of Beverly Hills Municipal Code.

**For questions please contact:**

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