



City of Laguna Niguel
Building Division
30111 Crown Valley Pkwy
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677
(949)362-4360
www.cityoflagunaniguel.org

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

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RESIDENTIAL ROOM ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST

When submitting plans for Building Plan Check, **three (3) sets** of scaled drawings with the following information are required:

SITE PLAN – Indicate distances to the property lines.

FOUNDATION PLAN & DETAILS – Expansive soils are common in the City of Laguna Niguel. Provide footings with a minimum depth of 24” below undisturbed soil with 2 #5 rebar continuous top and bottom. Show reinforcing steel for perimeter and spread footings. A minimum 5” thick slab reinforced with a minimum #4 bars at 18” on center each way, a minimum 10 mil moisture barrier, and at least 2” of sand above and below the moisture barrier. Dowels a minimum of 6” into existing concrete and extend dowels a minimum 24” into new concrete with #3 bars at 18” on center. A Geotechnical report may be required based on the scope of the project. Please see handout 142 Geotechnical Report and Minimum Foundation Requirements.

CONCRETE – High levels of sulfates are common in soils in Laguna Niguel, therefore, concrete in contact with soil shall have an Ultimate Compressive Strength of 4,500 psi. The concrete shall be 4,500 psi, type V cement and the water cement ratio of 0.45.

FLOOR PLAN – Indicate the new areas, door sizes, window sizes, headers, electrical outlets, light switches, FAU registers, plumbing fixtures, etc. (Existing floor plan to be included). When adding significant electrical work, provide panel schedule showing acceptable space to add new load.

ROOF PLAN – Indicate roof slopes, ridges, valleys, flashings, overhangs, drainage, type of plywood, etc. Class A Roofing is required on all additions and if the addition is 50% or more of the roof then the whole roof shall be replaced with class “A” roofing.

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS – Indicate finish materials (stucco, siding, etc.). Show setbacks to property line from the building and any protrusion.

STRUCTURAL PLAN(S) – Indicate framing member sizes and grade, beam sizes, and construction details. Show all construction details and section cuts through additions and existing structure.

STRUCTURAL CALCULATIONS – Any component that changes or affects any engineered building, including but not limited to structural or seismic components shall be designed by a licensed architect or engineer. Plans and calculations shall be wet stamped, signed and dated (2 sets of structural calculations are required at time of submittal).

ENERGY COMPLIANCE FORMS – When required by the State Energy Commission, (2) sets of energy compliance forms shall be submitted. Laguna Niguel is in Climate Zone 6. For questions, you may call The State of California Energy Standards Hotline at (800) 772-3300.

NOTE: School District Fees will be required to be paid prior to issuing a building permit for additions over 500 sq. ft.



DWELLING DESIGN

1. **Purpose:** This information is intended to provide general guidance on the non-structural building code requirements relating to the design of one or two story single family residences of less than 3000 square feet. It is not a complete rendering of all of the detail contained in the building, plumbing, mechanical or electrical codes and is not intended to replace them. It does not address structural issues. It is intended to provide a checklist of issues that experience shows should be addressed during the planning stage of dwelling construction or remodel. Where unusual circumstances are encountered or where more detail is needed the codes should be consulted. Building codes can be reviewed in many libraries or at your Building Department.
2. **Stairs:** Stairs must be at least 36" wide except that the handrails may project into this width as much as 4- 1/2" on each side if necessary. The stairway must have a minimum headroom clearance of 6'-8". Stair risers must be between 4" and 7-3/4" high and their height must be the same throughout the flight. The maximum difference allowed between the highest and lowest riser is 3/8". Stair treads must be at least 12" deep. For safety and if space is available, it is best to make stairs as gradual as possible. If the stairs curve or spiral, consult the 2025 California Building Code.
3. **Handrails:** Stairways with 3 or more risers are required to have at least one handrail. Handrails must be continuous and smooth with a hand grip portion between 1-1/4" and 2" in cross-section. If you intend to fabricate your own rail it is best to show a sample to your building inspector before installation. Place handrails between 34" and 38" above the nose of the treads. They must be at least 1-1/2" from the wall. Stairs that are open on the side must have a guardrail at least as high as the handrail. See below.
4. **Guards:** Elevated porches, landings, decks or floors that are 30" or more above grade or floor below must have a guard at least 42" high. It must be rigid and secure and strong enough to accept a single concentrated load of 200 pounds applied in any direction at any point along the top of the guard. It is typical to use bolts or metal brackets instead of nails to secure guard posts. Open guards shall have balusters or ornamental patterns such that a 4" sphere cannot pass through any opening. Consult section R312 of the 2025 California Residential Code for additional code requirements and exceptions.
5. **Exit doors:** The landing at an exterior doorway shall not be more than 7 3/4" below the top of the threshold, provided the door does not swing over the landing. The landing width shall not be less than the door served and shall be a minimum of 36". The minimum landing length shall be 36" when the door opens out over an exterior surface.
6. **Emergency exits:** Sleeping rooms must be provided with a means to exit directly to the outside in case of fire. Sleeping rooms must have a window or door that is openable from the inside without tools. These windows must be large enough to let occupants escape and firemen to climb in. Such windows must have a net clear opening of at least 5.7 sq ft. on the second floor and 5.0 sq ft. on the first floor. They must have a minimum net clear width of 20" and a minimum clear height of 24". The finished sill height may not exceed 44" from finished floor. Bars, grills, grates are not permitted in Laguna Niguel.
7. **Hallways:** Hallways must be at least three feet wide.
8. **Safety glass:** Safety glazing is required in doors of all types, shower enclosures, bath enclosures, whirlpool enclosures, etc., window glazing that is within 24" of a door unless it is 5' above the floor, windows greater than 9 sq. ft. and within 18" of the floor, and glass in guardrails and handrails. Where the opening of the sill portion of an operable window is more than 72" above grade, the opening shall be fixed or be a minimum of 24" off the floor. Use caution when ordering windows that may be located near doors because windows are not normally equipped with safety glazing. Consult the 2025 California Residential Code for more information.



9. **Carbon Monoxide / Smoke detectors:** Carbon monoxide detectors are required on each level of the home in a central location. Smoke detectors shall be located in all rooms that can be used for sleeping, in hallways leading to rooms that can be used for sleeping, and on each story within a dwelling unit. Detectors shall be hard wired from the house wiring in all new construction. Battery powered detectors may be used in some cases like remodels. All smoke and carbon monoxide detectors shall be equipped with a 10-year life battery in a sealed unit. (refer to the 2025 California Residential Code R314 and R315 for specific job requirements and the state fire marshal requirements).
10. **Room sizes:** Habitable spaces and corridors must have a ceiling height of at least 7'6" but bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms may be 7'0". Consult the 2025 California Residential Code for sloped ceilings, furred ceilings and ceilings with exposed structural members. Habitable rooms may not be less than 7' in any dimension. Kitchens, baths, halls, laundry spaces, utility room, etc., may be smaller.
11. **Light and ventilation:** Provide habitable rooms with glazed windows for natural light with a minimum net glazed area of 8% of the floor area. Provide habitable rooms with minimum openable area to the outdoors of 4% of the floor area being ventilated. Provide bathrooms with openable windows. Provided mechanical ventilation with a humidistat controller in all bathrooms that have a tub or shower.
12. **Laundry chutes:** Laundry chutes represent a severe fire-spread problem. Consult section R302 of the 2025 C.R.C. for detailed requirements.
13. **Firewall:** Where the garage is attached to the house, a separation from the dwelling unit and the attic area is required by means of a minimum ½" type X gypsum board applied to the garage side. Garages beneath habitable rooms shall be separated from all habitable rooms above by not less than a 5/8" Type X gypsum board or equivalent. A door between the house and such a garage must be a minimum of 1 3/8" solid wood, tight fitting, self-closing and self-latching with a weather seal. Any penetration of the firewall or lid shall be of a one hour rated material/assembly.
14. **Circuit breaker panels:** Electrical panels must be installed with a dedicated working space 30" wide and 36" deep. Consult Article 110.26 of the 2025 California Electrical Code. Show the service panel and subpanel location on the plans.
15. **Lights and receptacles:** Plan on one switchable receptacle or light in every room and hall. Plan on a light outside exterior doors with an interior switch. If lights are planned in closets consult Article 410.8 of the 2025 C.E.C. Plan to install electrical receptacles so that no point measured horizontally along the floor line in any space is more than 6 feet from a receptacle outlet. Plan on one GFCI protected receptacle on a dedicated 20-amp circuit breaker at the bathroom sinks. Receptacle outlets shall be installed at wall counter spaces (such as kitchen counters) so that no point along the wall line is more than 24" measured horizontally from a receptacle outlet in that space, and they must be GFCI protected. 2 separate 20 amp dedicated circuits required to serve kitchen counter tops. All lighting must comply with the 2025 California Energy Code. Check for current Title 24 requirements.
16. **Toilets:** Plan a space at least 30" wide for the toilet. The space must be deep enough to allow 24" of clear space in front of the fixture. Consult Section 407.6 of the California Plumbing Code.
17. **Tubs:** Most bathtubs and whirlpool baths require an access panel to the trap, overflow or pump. Glued fittings do not need to be accessible; however, motors need access for servicing, show the location of the access panel.



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18. **Forced Air Units:** Consult installation directions for appropriate clearances. The return air inlet for blower type furnaces must be at least ten feet from the draft hood of your water heater or other fuel burning appliance and must not be where it will pick up objectionable odors or moisture (such as in a kitchen). Forced air units require bulky ducts and plenums; therefore, careful planning is needed when locating the unit. Show its location and dedicated working space in front of the unit.
19. **Fuel burning appliances:** Fuel burning appliances such as water heaters and furnaces require combustion air and exhaust vents that must extend to the outside. Thought must be given to routing the vent(s). It is advisable to locate fuel burning appliances adjacent to an outside wall for ease in providing combustion air. Consult the 2025 California Mechanical Code and 2025 California Energy Code.
20. **Roof decks:** Plumbing vents shall terminate at least 6 inches above the roof surface and not less than 1 foot from any vertical surface or roof valley. Each vent shall be not less than 10 feet from or at least 3 feet above any openable window door, opening, air intake.
21. **Clothes Dryers:** The length of ducts is limited. Place these appliances near an outside wall and consult the installation directions. If you cannot place them at an outside wall, then consult the 2025 California Mechanical Code (C.M.C.). The typical rule is 14' max. length with 2 - 90 degree turns. Consult the manufacturer specifications for your specific product. Vents shall terminate a minimum of 3 feet from any opening into the house and at least 3 feet from any property line.
22. **Fuel Burning Appliance Vents:** Vent system offsets are limited. Consult the 2025 C.M.C. where the vent cannot be routed straight up through the roof. Consult the manufacturer specifications for your specific product.

NOTE: All exterior modifications require Planning Department approval PRIOR to submittal to the Building Department.

- Home Owner Association Approval (if applicable).

Contact the Planning Department at (949) 362-4300 for questions and or additional information.