

An Introduction to Title 24

Since 1978, in California, all new and altered buildings are required to meet the minimum energy efficiency standards defined in Title 24, Part 6, of the California Code of Regulations. These standards, which are updated every few years, were established in response to a legislative mandate to reduce California's energy consumption.

Title 24 standards are enforced by requiring building permit applicants to submit energy efficiency compliance documentation with their permit application. This documentation, often called a Title 24 report, includes calculations that show that the proposed construction meets or exceeds the minimum energy efficiency standards in effect at the date of the application.

Almost all Title 24 documentation is prepared by a specialist using state-certified energy modeling software. These specialists, who have an understanding of the Title 24 regulations, building science, mechanical systems, and how to use the modeling software, are typically called energy consultants.

Currently, no special certifications or education are required to prepare Title 24 documentation for a building permit. However, there are two voluntary certifications that identify energy consultants that have undergone special training and adhere to the highest professional levels:

- Certified Energy Plans Examiner (CEPE); and
- Certified Energy Analyst (CEA).

You become a CEPE by passing an open-book examination and agreeing to abide by a professional code of ethics. Certification at this level demonstrates a person's understanding of the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards, and ensures competency and ethical behavior in the preparation or plan checking of Title 24 documents.

CEA is a higher level of certification. It requires a minimum of one year of experience doing Title 24 calculations, after becoming a CEPE, and a minimum of six hours per year of continuing education. In addition, a CEA applicant must provide client references, complete a professional practices workshop, and sign an agreement binding them to conduct business in a professional manner.



Both certifications, including the examinations, application processing, and continuing education requirements are administered by a non-profit organization called the California Association of Building Energy Consultants (CABEC). CABEC also hosts an annual conference, educational workshops and webinars, and other events to guarantee that CABEC members stay well informed about current Title 24 requirements and how to best serve their clients.

A certified energy consultant typically does much more than prepare compliance documentation for their clients. They may also:

- Advise them on energy efficient building techniques, upcoming changes to the energy standards, or new energy saving equipment and building techniques;
- Assist them with state, local, and utility incentive programs,
- Provide mechanical design or third-party certification services for programs such as Energy Star or LEED; and
- Identify local jurisdiction idiosyncrasies to assure that their Title 24 report proceeds smoothly through the plan check process.

CEPE and CEA Certification is becoming increasingly important throughout California's building industry. Some state and utility incentive programs are requiring documentation preparation by certified energy consultants in order to participate in the programs. As energy efficiency standards get tougher and more complex, architects, builders, designers, and other construction professionals will be relying on certified energy consultants to help meet these standards and build the best possible buildings.

As the organization that manages the certification process, the California Association of Building Energy Consultants is the best resource available for staying on top of changes to the Title 24 standards, finding certified energy consultants, and staying informed about energy efficiency in California.

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9974 Scripps Ranch Blvd. #130

San Diego, CA 92131

executivedirector@cabec.org

877-530-3045 Phone 858-530-3045 FAX