

# Do I Need an Architect?

## What Types of Building Projects Do Require an Architect?

### MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENCES

such as duplexes, triplexes, quadriplexes, apartments, townhomes (sharing common walls).



**BUILDINGS LARGER THAN 2,500 SQUARE FEET**

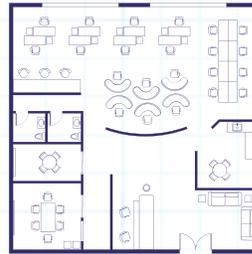


### ASSEMBLY OR EDUCATION OCCUPANCY

buildings intended for assembly or education (as classified by the building code adopted in the jurisdiction where the building will be located).



**INTERIOR ALTERATIONS** involving a change in occupancy type to a more stringent occupancy type; e.g., business to education or assembly.



## What Types of Building Projects Do NOT Require an Architect?

**RESIDENTIAL PLANS** if the building is a detached, single-family home.



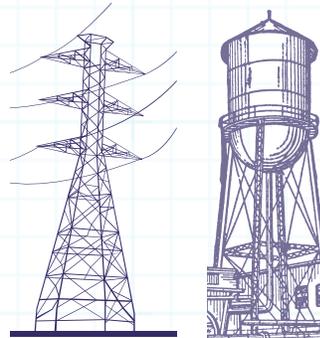
**SMALL RESTAURANTS** under 2,500 square feet with occupancy load less than 50.



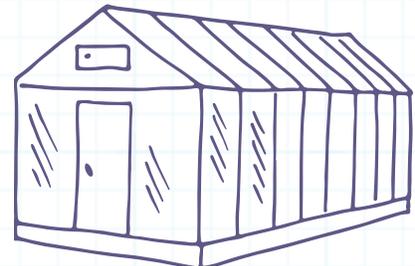
**FARM BUILDINGS** if not for public use.



**UTILITY WORKS, STRUCTURES, OR BUILDINGS** if the person who designs them is employed by an electric, gas, or telephone public utility.



**SMALL BUILDINGS** if under 2,500 square feet or not intended for assembly or education occupancy, as defined by the building code adopted in the local jurisdiction.





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## General Information

### Who has jurisdiction over a building project if there is no local building official?

The Alabama Fire Marshal assumes jurisdiction in this case. Contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (334) 241-4166 or FireMarshal@insurance.alabama.gov.

### Can a person registered in another state practice architecture in Alabama prior to receiving his/her Alabama registration?

No.

### Can a person interview for a project, participate in a design competition, or submit a response to an RFP for architectural services prior to receiving his/her Alabama registration?

No.

### How do I verify an architect's registration status in Alabama?

Click [here](#) to search the Alabama Board of Architect's licensee roster.

### What is a Certificate of Authorization (COA)?

A Certificate issued to a firm entity (corporation, professional corporation, professional association, partnership, or limited liability company) which acknowledges it is practicing architecture as an entity in Alabama as opposed to being a sole practitioner.

### Are all firms required to have a COA?

Yes, unless the architect is practicing as a sole proprietor.

### Who do I contact if there is no architect on a project that requires one?

Alabama Board for Registration of Architects  
445 Dexter Avenue, Suite 4010  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
www.boa.alabama.gov  
(334) 242-4179

## Use of the Architect's Seal - Questions and Answers

### What does an architect's seal look like?

Two inches in diameter, containing the registrant's name and registration number in the inner circle substantially resembling the sample here:



### Can a registrant seal plans begun or contracted for by a person who is not registered?

No. The licensee must make the plans his/her own work product.

### Can an architect prepare and seal engineering plans?

Generally, no; however, "incidental" engineering is allowed. Architects generally should not seal electrical, mechanical, plumbing, civil, or structural engineering drawings, unless the engineering is of a minor nature or an addition to the primary engineering system.

### Can an architect use an electronic seal on architectural plans?

Yes.

### Is the registered architect required to place his/her signature on the seal or any part of the drawings?

Not under the registration law; individual jurisdictions may require it.

### If an architect prepares plans for a single-family home or another exempt project, should the documents be sealed?

Yes, if he/she uses the title "architect" in conjunction with the project.

### Is the project manual required to be sealed?

Yes.



# Do I Need an Architect?



## Use of the Architect's Seal - Questions and Answers continued

### Must a registrant seal change orders?

Yes, if the documents can only be lawfully prepared by a registered architect.

### Are addenda and field changes required to be sealed?

Yes, if changes are prepared by a registrant.

### Are "record drawings" required to be sealed?

Yes. It is advisable to identify them as "record drawings" with a statement or disclaimer.

### Can a registrant seal another registrant's standard design (prototypical) plans?

Yes, under conditions outlined in Board for Registration of Architects Regulation 100-X-5-.09.

### Can a registrant modify and seal a deceased registrant's sealed drawings without completely re-drawing them?

Yes, in compliance with the conditions of Board for Registration of Architects Regulation 100-X-5-.05.

### Can a registrant modify and seal drawings previously sealed by another registrant who was terminated by the owner without completely re-drawing them?

Yes, in compliance with the conditions of Board for Registration of Architects Regulation 100-X-5-.05.

## Red Flags

-  Architectural "A" drawing sheets sealed by an engineer.
-  Plans, details, or other documents do not apply to the specific project.
-  Engineering "E" drawing sheets sealed by an architect.
-  Plans have numerous serious code violations.
-  Plans not sealed by the registrant.
-  Plans are confusing, unclear, or contain non-dated revisions.
-  Unsealed church plans.
-  Contact for the project is not the registrant, or it is difficult to contact the registrant.

## Questions? - Contact Board of Architects



334-242-4179



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Montgomery, AL 36104



[www.boa.alabama.gov](http://www.boa.alabama.gov)

*"Safe Buildings Begin with an Architect."*