



Disney Construction Q&A

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NEW DSA questions 9/28/20

I keep hearing about the DSA. What is the DSA?

On March 10, 1933 an earthquake occurred that destroyed or rendered 230 school buildings unsafe in Southern California. Many school buildings had completely collapsed due to unreinforced masonry construction and/or shoddy workmanship. The earthquake occurred at 5:55 pm on a Friday, several hours after school had let out. Had the earthquake occurred while school was in session earlier that afternoon, thousands of casualties, mainly children, would have likely occurred. Public awareness of this narrowly averted tragedy led to passage of the Field Act within 30 days of the quake by the [California State Legislature](#). The Act was named after California Assemblyman Charles Field, the key sponsor of the legislation. The act was based on the research done by [San Diego](#) architect [Louis John Gill](#), then president of the California State Board of Architectural Examiners, who traveled to the stricken area within hours of the quake and analyzed the structural failures which had caused buildings to collapse. As a result of the Field Act being passed the Division of the State Architect was created. Below is the History of the DSA and how it has evolved into what it is today:

HISTORY 1906: San Francisco Earthquake, 1907: The State Architect is created under the Department of Engineering to oversee design for all state buildings, 1933: Long Beach Earthquake, 1933: The Field Act establishes the Division of the State Architect (DSA), which is charged with establishing and enforcing safety standards for new public schools, 1945: DSA moves to the Department of Public Works, 1963: DSA moves to the Department of General Services (DGS), 1982: A provision is added to the Field Act, specifying that nothing in the Act "shall prevent beneficial occupancy by a school district" prior to DSA certification that a school building complies with the Field Act, 1992: DSA assumes responsibility from the State Fire Marshall for ensuring Fire and Life Safety code compliance, 1997: DSA delegates some responsibilities to the DGS Real Estate Services Division.

Why is the DSA needed to build a school?

The Division of the State Architect (DSA) provides design and construction oversight for K–12 schools, community colleges, and various other state-owned and state-leased facilities to ensure that they comply with all structural, accessibility, and fire and life safety codes. To promote consistent knowledge and application of the California Building Codes, as well as information for successful plan review and construction of projects under DSA's jurisdiction, DSA offers classes through its DSA Academy.

- DSA also develops accessibility, structural safety, and historical building codes and standards utilized in various public and private buildings throughout the state of California. Various groups were established to work with DSA on these projects.

- DSA is also charged with administering certification programs for project inspectors, materials testing laboratories, and certified access specialists.
- DSA is headquartered in Sacramento with regional offices in Oakland, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

Education Code

- Section 17280 - 17316 (Field Act; K-12)
- Section 81130 - 81147 (Field Act; Community Colleges)

Government Code

- Section 4450 (Accessibility)
- Section 4465 - 4470 (Disability Access and Education)
- Section 14963 (Fire and Life Safety)

Health and Safety Code

- Section 16000 - 16023 (Essential Services Buildings)
- Section 18950 - 18961 (State Historical Building Code)

Regulations - Title 24, Parts 1 - 12

- Part 1 - Administrative Code
- Part 2 - Building Code
- Parts 3, 4, 5, 6 - Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing & Energy Codes
- Part 9 - Fire Code
- Part 11 - CALGreen Code

What Authority does the DSA have? Can't we just build the new building without DSA?

DSA Jurisdiction - Building/Construction Type

All construction must be reviewed and approved by DSA before a contract for construction can be awarded. Title 24, Part 1 defines several exceptions (not including access compliance) to DSA jurisdiction for Building Code enforcement for various types of construction as described below (for more information on construction types, see DSA's Scope of Projects for DSA Plan Submittal by Construction Type in the dropdown/below).

1. **New Construction:** Per Title 24, Part 1, Section 4-314 - Definitions, the following structures are classified as "school buildings" and are therefore subject to complete review and approval by DSA:
 - Facilities or structures used for instructional purposes or intended to be entered by pupils or teachers for school purposes.
 - Dwellings for pupils or teachers on the school site.
 - Any structure, utility system or facility necessary to the complete functioning of the school.
 - Any structure on school grounds that could endanger pupils or teachers if it were to collapse.
2. **Additions:** All additions are subject to DSA review and approval regardless of size or cost. Note that additions may only be made to DSA compliant structures unless alterations to bring the existing structure into compliance are also included in the scope of the project. See IR A-20.
3. **Alterations:** Alteration projects require DSA review and approval except for low cost projects as described in DSA IR A-10. Projects shall not be subdivided for the purpose of evading review requirements.

Note that construction must still conform to all building code requirements and that the school board is still responsible for hiring a licensed architect or engineer to prepare plans

and specifications for the construction, and must also provide for adequate inspection of the construction even when plan review by DSA is not required.

The Field Act imposes important requirements on California K–12 public schools and community colleges that are not present in other types of construction approval processes:

- Licensed design professionals must prepare drawings and specifications for proposed construction work.
- Drawings and specifications have to be verified by DSA for compliance with applicable building codes.
- The building codes utilized in the design of school buildings contain structural provisions superior to many other types of facilities, with consideration for known seismic activity in California.
- A project owner (school or community college district) must hire a DSA-certified inspector to oversee construction. The inspector selection must be approved by the owner, design professionals and DSA.
- Changes to approved drawings and specifications for DSA-regulated portions of the project shall be submitted and approved by DSA prior to commencement of work.

At the conclusion of construction, the design professionals, the inspector and the contractor shall file verified reports with DSA indicating the work has been performed in compliance with the approved plans and specifications