



# LOS ANGELES BASIN CHAPTER

---

## INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL

Established 1957  
[www.icclabc.org](http://www.icclabc.org)

P.O. Box 1099  
Alhambra, CA 91802

### **Model Special Inspection Program**

#### **“Frequently Asked Questions”**

1. What is a special inspector?
2. Why do I need a special inspector, doesn't the City perform all the required inspections?
3. How do I find a special inspector?
4. What requires special inspections?
5. Who hires the special inspector?
6. Does the special inspector cost additional money?
7. Should the construction drawings detail the criteria for special inspections?
8. Our project is currently under construction and the construction drawings do not detail a special inspection program, they simply state special inspections are required; what should I do?
9. My contractor did not include the cost of a special inspector in my construction estimate, what should I do?
10. What is the Los Angeles Basin Chapter Model Special Inspection Program?
11. I thought my project was ready for a final inspection but I have been notified special inspections were not performed, what should I do?
12. I'm a special inspector registered in the City of Los Angeles; can I work in any City the LABC Region?
13. Are there standard forms available?
14. Do I need to check in with the City before I perform a special inspection for a project in their jurisdiction?
15. Do special inspectors have to notify a building department at least 24 hours in advance of performing a special inspection for the first time on a project within their City?



# LOS ANGELES BASIN CHAPTER

---

## INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL

Established 1957  
[www.icclabc.org](http://www.icclabc.org)

P.O. Box 1099  
Alhambra, CA 91802

### Answers:

#### 1. *What is a special inspector?*

Special inspection is the monitoring of the materials and workmanship that are critical to the integrity of the building. In general, special inspections, (historically known as deputy inspections) are in addition to the normal building, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical inspections conducted by the building and safety departments or structural observations conducted by the design licensed professional. Special inspectors have a unique dual role of representing the interests of a property owner as well as the building and safety department. The specialized task frequently includes lengthy, continuous, and extensive monitoring of construction materials and the workmanship of the installation by the trades person. A special inspection may last only 30 minutes in duration or may occur for extended periods of time throughout the course of an entire project.

A special inspector is different than the city's building inspector in that they specialize in limited portions of work related to a specific trade; and they apply that knowledge to the related critical building or structural features identified on the plans and specifications by the registered design professional in responsible charge (RDP) which are in turn approved by the building official.

In example, welding is one of the many trades that frequently require special inspection. Although during a frame inspection for the entire building the City inspector will confirm welded structural members are the correct size and in the correct place, the special inspector will observe the actual welding process which may take several hours or days.

#### 2. *Why do I need a special inspector, doesn't the City perform all the required inspections?*

In addition to the information provided in question 1, it is helpful to understand that there are several areas of construction regulated by the by the building codes where special inspection is mandatory. The special inspector generally verifies the trades person has used the appropriate materials and performed their duties according to the approved plans, specifications, and the building code. Expanding the example as provided in question 1 regarding a welding special inspector, amongst many other things, the special inspector would ensure a welder is using the appropriate welding equipment and they would also ensure that the weld is penetrating the surfaces as intended. Inspecting a weld "after the fact" would not confirm this criterion.



## LOS ANGELES BASIN CHAPTER

---

### INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL

Established 1957  
[www.icclabc.org](http://www.icclabc.org)

P.O. Box 1099  
Alhambra, CA 91802

#### 3. *How do I find a special inspector?*

Most participating City Building Departments maintain, or have a cross reference available, to a published list of special inspectors approved to work in their jurisdiction. The goal of Los Angeles Basin Chapter (LABC) Model Special Inspection Program (Program) is to promote uniformity and encourage the participating cities to allow any special inspector recognized by the Program to perform special inspections in their jurisdiction.

#### 4. *What requires special inspections?*

In regards the LABC Model Special Inspection program, there are several categories in the building code which require special inspection including (but not limited to): Steel fabrication and on-site steel construction, high strength concrete and masonry, wood diaphragms that are not considered “conventional construction,” pile and pier foundations, on-site applied fire-resistive coverings, exterior insulation and finish systems and waterproofing, smoke control and intumescent materials, and seismic and wind resistant requirements. On more complex projects, several of these disciplines of work will be applicable and via a “Statement of Special Inspections” on the approved plans and the registered design professional is responsible for detailing the requirements of these categories. The Statement of Special Inspections is a detailed list of the: materials, systems and components, testing and special inspection requirements, as well as frequency and extent of inspections and testing.

#### 5. *Who hires the special inspector?*

The property owner is usually responsible for securing the services of the special inspector as it's a conflict of interest for the contractor to do so. However, the design professional in responsible charge may secure the services of the special inspector or they may otherwise coordinate with the property owner in the selection of special inspectors.

#### 6. *Does the special inspector cost additional money?*

Yes special inspectors are an additional cost. The project owner, the registered design professional in responsible charge, or an agent of the owner is responsible for funding special inspection services. The special inspector or inspection agency shall not be in the employ of the contractor, subcontractor or material supplier.

#### 7. *Should the construction drawings detail the criteria for special inspections?*

Yes, the approved construction plans must detail the special inspection criteria via a “Statement of Special Inspections” prepared by the design professional. However, for smaller projects which are very limited with special inspection scope, your local building department and design license professional may accept the simplified LABC “Check-In Form.” The Check-In Form has basic special inspection criteria and can be considered a “Statement of Special Inspections.”



## LOS ANGELES BASIN CHAPTER

---

## INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL

Established 1957  
[www.icclabc.org](http://www.icclabc.org)

P.O. Box 1099  
Alhambra, CA 91802

8. *Our project is currently under construction and the construction drawings do not detail a special inspection program, they simply state special inspections are required; what should I do?*

Consult your design professional. It is his/her responsibility to clarify which phases of construction require special inspection. The building inspector representing the jurisdiction of which project is located may also help clarify any additional local requirements.

9. *My contractor did not include the cost of a special inspector in my construction estimate, what should I do?*

If the cost and or requirement for special inspections were not made clear to a property owner, it would be best to consult with the design license professional.

10. *What is the Los Angeles Basin Chapter Model Special Inspection Program?*

The Los Angeles Basin Chapter of ICC (“LABC”) Model Special Inspection Program (“Program”) is intended to enable a special inspector to work in multiple jurisdictions while limiting the necessity of a complex registration process in each and every City they may desire to work in. As an example, should a special inspector be registered with the City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, that special inspector would be included in the uniform list of registered special inspectors and would be recognized by most smaller jurisdictions located in the Los Angeles Basin region. The program also recognizes that while some construction projects may be very large and complex, and therefore require a very detailed statement of special inspection procedure within the structural drawings, a significant percentage of construction projects in the Los Angeles Basin region may be very small, and only require a few special inspections. For those smaller projects, a simple “Check-In” form may be all that is required. Whether the special inspections are related to a simple or complex project, the LABC program also is designed to include helpful explanatory information, forms and guidelines for special inspectors, design licensed professionals, and building and safety departments.

Last, the program is also intended to provide a uniform program and established procedures that provide building department flexibility for specific needs. While some participating jurisdictions may adopt the program uniformly, some jurisdictions may only adopt components they deem germane for their policy and procedure. As always, should anyone have a question regarding any building department’s policy and procedure, it is highly recommended that person contact the jurisdiction to ascertain the requirements accordingly.

The primary goal of any building and safety department is to create, promote and maintain public safety and a healthy environment through reasonable enforcement of adopted codes and ordinances. The unified program ultimately has the same long range goal but the underlying mission is to help remove obstacles that may challenge special inspectors who work throughout the region



## LOS ANGELES BASIN CHAPTER

---

### INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL

Established 1957  
[www.icclabc.org](http://www.icclabc.org)

P.O. Box 1099  
Alhambra, CA 91802

11. *I thought my project was ready for a final inspection but I have been notified special inspections were not performed, what should I do?*

Contact the design professional for recommend remedies for missed special inspections. Often various nondestructive testing methods are available. Removal of building finishes may be necessary to provide access to the structural components not special inspected.

12. *I'm a special inspector registered in the City of Los Angeles; can I work in any City the LABC Region?*

Most jurisdictions that recognize the LABC Model Inspection Program recognize registered LA City Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) special inspectors. However, it is recommended to contact the particular jurisdiction to confirm the criteria.

13. *Are there standard forms available?*

Yes, the LABC Program has standard forms available. In some cases however, the local jurisdiction may require that reports be submitted on the city's own forms, it may be prudent to check with each jurisdiction for local requirements.

14. *Do I need to check in with the City before I perform a special inspection for a project in their jurisdiction?*

Yes, most jurisdictions have a "check-in" requirement for special inspectors to aid the city in managing special inspection activities within their jurisdiction.

In addition, most jurisdictions encourage direct communications between the special inspector and the City building inspector of record.

15. *Do special inspectors have to notify a building department at least 24 hours in advance of performing a special inspection for the first time on a project within their City?*

Special Inspectors are highly encouraged to provide the notice at least 24 hours in advance.