

California Compliance Toolkit

Everything You Need To
Achieve Compliance

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Compliance Checklist



Confirm Your Building is Affected

- Does your property have balconies, decks, walkways, or stairs more than 6 feet off the ground?
- Are these elements made of wood or have wood structural framing?
- Do these qualify as Exterior Elevated Elements (EEE) under the law?

Hire the Right Inspector

- Ensure inspector is independent (not doing repairs)
- Confirm they are licensed structural engineer, architect, or B-licensed contractor
- Request their proof of insurance
- Ask about report turnaround time
- Use a provider with experience in your city or county requirements

Prepare for Inspection

- Notify tenants 24–48 hours in advance
- Clear balconies of furniture and plants
- Unlock crawlspaces or concealed access areas
- Gather past repair and maintenance records

Post-Inspection Requirements

- Review the written report (must include photos, condition ratings, repair priorities)
- File the report with your local building department (if required)
- Schedule and complete any repair recommendations
- Retain a copy for your records for at least 2 inspection cycles

Balcony Inspection Checklist

Before the inspector arrives please:

1. Make sure to clean up your balcony.
2. Remove any carpet and planter.
3. You need to inform your tenant to be ready and prepare themselves (DrBalcony will notify you through the platform to help coordinate with them)

Preliminary Information

- Type of building
- Approximate age of building
- Number of levels
- Number of units with elevated elements
- Direction building faces

Exterior Elevated Elements (EEEs)

- Number of walkways
- Number of elevated decks (more than 6 feet above ground)
- Number of stairways
- Number of stairway landings
- Number of balconies

Structural Defects they may find:

Structural Integrity and Condition

- Structural weaknesses such as visible cracks
- Missing screws or other necessary hardware
- Connections that are either loose or improperly secured
- Excessive wobbling, sagging, or instability
- Corrosion-affected metal components, such as fasteners
- Decaying or damaged wood elements, including dry rot
- Presence of wood dust
- Assessment of the condition of framing, ledger board, support posts, beams, and joists

Decking and Walking Surfaces

- Examine for cracks or loose tiles on the deck surface
- Assess walkways and entry points
- Check for damage on treads and risers on stairways
- Identify tripping hazards or uneven surfaces in the area
- Evaluate floor structure and ensure stability

Flashing and Waterproofing Systems

- Evaluate waterproofing materials
- Verify correct placement of flashing and caulking
- Assess effectiveness and condition of drainage systems
- Inspect the deck's waterproof coating
- Identify gaps and cracks between wall and balcony deck
- Check for signs of rust and corrosion
- Recognize deteriorating wood elements
- Detect any other signs of leakage

Guardrails, Handrails, and Other Elements

- Ensure balusters are closely spaced to prevent a 4-inch sphere from passing through
- Ensure triangle-shaped spaces block a 6-inch sphere from passing through
- Guardrails and handrails free from looseness, unfastening, or wobbling
- Guardrails meet IRC height (36 inches for residential)
- Guardrails meet IBC height (42 inches for commercial)
- Confirm all railings remain stable under weight or pressure
- Ensure safety glass panels are undamaged and crack-free
- Check condition of outdoor electrical components, such as power outlets and lighting fixtures

Balcony Inspector Checklist

Verify Qualifications

- 1
 - Licensing: Ensure the inspector holds the necessary licenses specific to California regulations for balcony inspections.
 - Certifications: Check for any relevant certifications in structural engineering, architecture, or building inspections.

Experience and Expertise

- 2
 - Track Record: Ask about the inspector's experience, particularly with balcony and deck inspections.
 - Specialization: Verify if they specialize in residential, commercial, or multifamily structures, depending on your needs.

Knowledge of Regulations

- 3
 - Familiarity with Laws: Confirm that the inspector is knowledgeable about California laws, specifically SB 326 and SB 721.
 - Code Compliance: Ensure they understand local building codes and regulations related to balconies.

Inspection Process

- 4 **Assessment Procedures:** Inquire about the methods and tools the inspector will use during the inspection.
- Thoroughness:** Ask for a detailed explanation of what areas will be inspected (e.g., structural integrity, moisture issues, railings).

Report and Recommendations

- 5 **Inspection Report:** Request a sample of a previous inspection report to evaluate clarity and comprehensiveness.
- Recommendations for Repairs:** Ensure the inspector provides clear recommendations for any necessary repairs or maintenance.

Cost and Fees

- 6 **Transparent Pricing:** Ask for a detailed breakdown of costs, including any additional fees for follow-up inspections or reports.
- Estimate:** Obtain a written estimate before the inspection to avoid surprises.

Availability and Timeliness

- 7 **Scheduling:** Confirm the inspector's availability to complete the inspection within your desired timeframe.
- Response Time:** Inquire about how quickly you can expect to receive the inspection report after completion.

Balcony Inspection Report Checklist

- Inspection date and time
- Who inspected?
- How was the inspection performed?
- How long does it take to be ready after completion of your report
- Pictures
- Stamped by a civil or architectural engineer
- Defects
- Recommendations
- Lifespan



Sample Inspection Report

Clarity


The report breaks down each inspection step with **labeled photos, defect codes, and clear findings**—making it easy to understand what’s wrong and where.

Compliance

It’s fully aligned with SB721, including **performance assessments, useful life estimates, and documented proof** of compliance for building safety laws.

Depth

Combining **visual inspections, moisture readings, and borescope scans**, the report offers a thorough assessment of both visible and hidden structural issues.



EEE Information				
Direction	West			
Unit Number	5-6-7			
EEE Type	Walkway			
Framing Type	Enclosed Wood			
Surface Type	Enclosed Wood			
Railing Type	Metal			
Railing Height	42 inches			
Railing Opening	5.25 inches			

Defect List				
Code	Type	Issue	Severity	Pictures of Identified Defects
122	Railing	Missing or Damaged Components of the railing	Moderate	Picture(s) 243,244
101	Railing	Corrosion of the metal railing	Moderate	Picture(s) 250,251,252,253,254,255
109	Railing	Bolt/Screw Connections of the Railing to the Wood Frame Require Repair or Retrofitting (Insufficient lateral stability)	Low	Picture(s) 247
113	Railing	Crack in Railing Post Connection to the Deck or Footing	Moderate	Picture(s) 248,249
19	Surface	Cracks/ Gaps on the surface	Moderate	Picture(s) 175,176,177
35	Surface	Surface Insufficient Slope	Moderate	Picture(s) 183
61	Surface	Discoloration of Surface	Moderate	Picture(s) 184,185,186,187,188
133	Waterproofing	Stucco discoloration underneath the EEE	Low	Picture(s) 271,272,273
137	Woodframe	Rotted/damaged decking or sheathing	Moderate	Picture(s) 357,358,359,360,361,362,363
202	Woodframe	Low level joist/rim joist/ beam/ ledger defect	Low	Picture(s) 364,365,366
240	Woodframe	Shiner Bolts from Railing to Wood Frame Not Connected Correctly	N/A	Picture(s) 367,368,369,370

*A high-resolution, large-scale version of each Picture can be viewed in the section below by clicking the hyperlink beneath each photo thumbnail, labeled "Link"
 *Defect Codes are proprietary internal classifications used solely for DrBalcony's identification purposes and do not correspond to any external regulatory standards such as municipal building codes

Inspection Result	
Result	Failed - Non-emergency Repair Required
Design Required?	Required : Crack in Railing Post Connection to the Deck or Footing Shiner Bolts from Railing to Wood Frame Not Connected Correctly
Score	0

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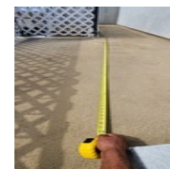
Surface Pictures



Picture 100
[Link \(click to view High-Res\)](#)



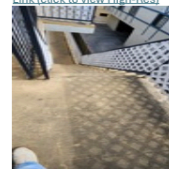
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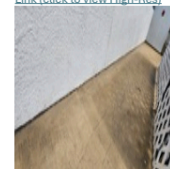
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Picture 103
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Picture 104
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Picture 105
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Balcony Inspection Budget Planning Template



Estimated Cost Breakdown

Item	Notes	Estimated Cost
Inspection Services	Cost per EEE × number of elements	\$ _____
Engineer Sign-Off Fee	If separate from inspector	\$ _____
Tenant Notice Printing & Delivery	Required 15-day advance notice	\$ _____
Contingency for Repairs	Recommended: 10–20% of inspection cost	\$ _____
Permit or Filing Fees	If required by city/county	\$ _____
Administrative/Board Meeting Time	Estimate for prep & coordination	\$ _____
Total Estimated Budget:		\$ _____

Payment Timeline

Phase	Estimated Date	Amount
Deposit for Inspection	-----	\$-----
Final Inspection Payment	-----	\$-----
Post-Inspection Repairs (if needed)	-----	\$-----
Report Submission Costs	-----	\$-----
Deposit for Inspection	-----	\$-----
Final Inspection Payment	-----	\$-----

Reserve Fund Planning

Reserve Category	Monthly Allocation	Annual Allocation
Balcony Inspections	\$-----	\$-----
Future Repairs	\$-----	\$-----
Legal/Compliance Support	\$-----	\$-----

Recommended: Set aside funds annually based on number of units and anticipated wear.

Are you at risk?

Self-Assessment Quiz

Section 1: Building Type

- Does your property have 3 or more residential units? (If no, you're likely exempt)
- Does it contain balconies, decks, catwalks, or stairs above 6 ft? (If no, you may still be subject to inspection depending on local laws)
- Are any of those made with wooden framing? (If yes, your property likely qualifies as having EEEs)

Section 2: Inspection Status

- Have you had an EEE inspection in the past 6–9 years? (If no, action required!)
- Do you have a signed report from a license engineer or architect? (If no, your property may be noncompliant)
- Were any major repairs recommended? (If no, great — you're likely in good shape)
- If yes, have they been completed?

Score	Meaning	Next Step
0–2 YES	Likely noncompliant	Schedule an inspection ASAP
3–5 YES	Partially compliant	Review your report & finish repairs
6+ YES	Likely on track	Confirm dates & retain documentation

HOA Board Resolution

Authorization to Conduct SB721/SB326 Balcony & Deck
Inspections

[Name of HOA or Community Association]

[Property Address / Community Location]

WHEREAS:

California Senate Bill SB721 and SB326 require periodic inspections of Exterior Elevated Elements (EEEs)—such as balconies, decks, stairways, and walkways—for multi-family residential buildings and condominium associations with three or more units.

AND WHEREAS:

These inspections must be conducted by a qualified licensed professional (licensed structural engineer, architect, or B-licensed general contractor with specific experience), and the resulting reports must be retained and made available to relevant parties and enforcement agencies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Board of Directors of [HOA Name] hereby approves and authorizes the scheduling and execution of EEE inspections in compliance with SB721 and/or SB326.
- The Board designates DrBalcony as the authorized inspection firm to perform required services for all applicable buildings within the community.
- The Board authorizes the [HOA President / Property Manager / Authorized Board Member] to coordinate logistics with residents and the inspection firm, including access, notices, and scheduling.

- The Board allocates HOA reserve funds or operating budget resources to cover inspection costs, not to exceed \$ _____ without further Board approval.
- All resulting inspection reports shall be retained on file for at least two inspection cycles (i.e., 12–18 years), shared with city officials as required, and made available to homeowners upon request.
- Any findings of structural concern or required repairs shall be addressed in accordance with California building codes, liability protections, and the community’s governing documents.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2025
By the Board of Directors of [HOA Name]

Board President


Date:

Secretary

Date:

Treasurer

Date:

 This resolution fulfills part of the legal documentation required for compliance with California Civil Code and State Balcony Safety Laws (SB721 & SB326).

Lunch & Learn

California's New Balcony Law Is in Effect — Are You Ready?

Schedule Yours



1 If you're a property manager unsure how to handle the 2025 balcony inspection law, you're not alone. The updated California Balcony Law now mandates inspections of decks, balconies, and exterior walkways for multi-family buildings—and most teams are still figuring out where to begin.

2 That's exactly why we created our Lunch & Learn sessions. Book a free on-site briefing at your office—DrBalcony will bring boxed lunches for up to 10 team members and deliver a 45-minute, plain-English session tailored to your portfolio. You pick the weekday, and we'll do the rest.

3 What's included?

- Live Q&A with our expert team (no jargon, just answers)
- A free Balcony Inspection Prep Checklist to guide your next steps
- A 25% voucher (code: LUNCH) valid for 30 days after your session



Free Educational Webinar



Register for Free

Join our Free Educational Webinars at 11am PST and leave with a step-by-step plan to stay compliant.

What you'll learn:

- New SB 721 & SB 326 timelines and penalties
- City-level overlays (Berkeley and more)
- AB 2801 photo documentation essentials
- Budget-saving tactics for phased repairs

We'll also host a live Q&A — bring your toughest compliance questions.

Ready to Get Compliant? Reach Out!

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