



Exterior Elevated Elements (Balcony Inspection Bill)



The City of Downey would like to inform you about State laws that affect multi-unit buildings with exterior elevated elements that are located more than six feet above the adjacent grade, such as balconies, walkways, decks, landings, railings, and stairways. Owners of these properties must hire a licensed professional to perform a safety inspection and submit an inspection report detailing their findings. **The deadline to complete the first safety inspection is January 1, 2025.** These laws are in response to a balcony collapse at an apartment complex at UC Berkeley in 2015, which tragically claimed the lives of six students.

State Law Information

On September 17, 2018, [Senate Bill 721](#) (California Health & Safety Code § 17973), the "Balcony Inspection Bill" or "Exterior Elevated Elements Bill", was signed into law for **apartments**. This law went into effect in January 2019.

On August 30, 2019, [Senate Bill 326](#) (California Civil Code § 5551) was signed into law for **condominiums**. This law went into effect in January 2020.

Requirements

The laws require multifamily property owners and condominium homeowners' associations (HOAs) to hire a licensed professional for necessary inspections to determine whether exterior elevated elements are in a safe and functional condition. Exterior elevated elements include balconies, walkways, decks, landings, railings, and stairways.

Buildings Subject to Laws

Multifamily apartment and condominium buildings are subject to the laws if they have ALL three of these characteristics:

1. Buildings that have three or more units, AND
2. Building has a wood-framed exterior elevated element that is located more than six feet above the adjacent grade - such as balconies, walkways, decks, landings, railings, or stairways, AND
3. Building is classified as an apartment or condominium building.

If the building has ALL three of these characteristics, then the property owner or HOA must obtain a safety inspection by a licensed professional and submit an inspection report.

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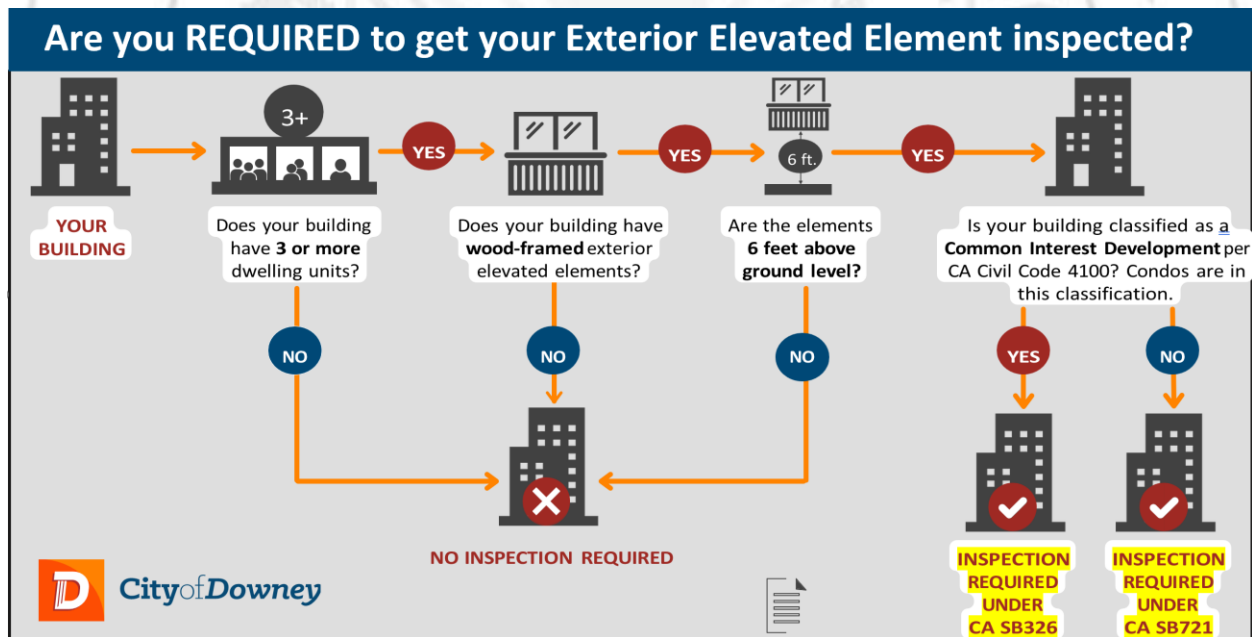
Inspection & Reporting Process

If you own a building with three or more dwelling units that has wood-framed exterior elevated elements which are located more than six feet above the adjacent grade, you will need to comply with these laws. **The deadline to complete the first safety inspection of the exterior elevated elements is January 1, 2025.** Subsequent inspections are required once every six years for apartments and once every nine years for condominiums.

There are separate laws for multifamily apartment buildings and condominium buildings. Senate Bill 721 applies to apartment buildings and property owners, while Senate Bill 326 applies to condominium buildings and HOAs. The laws are very similar; however, there are differences. For the specific requirements for each type of building, please visit the city's Apartment and Common Interest Development (condominium) webpages.

Buildings Not Subject to Laws

If ANY of the three characteristics described above do not apply to the building, then the building is exempt from the laws. To help multifamily property owners and condominium HOAs determine if their building is subject to these laws, please reference the following flowchart:



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