



You have been notified that you have a soft, weak or open front building with five or more dwelling units, subject to the mandatory retrofit requirements of the Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 19.39. What should you do now?

Hire a **design professional** (usually a licensed structural or civil engineer experienced with seismic retrofit designs), to prepare plans and calculations and submit a building permit application. In spring 2014, Engineering Framework Guidelines calibrating, delineating and detailing technical requirements to be used for the retrofitting of buildings on the City of Berkeley inventory of Soft, Weak or Open Front (SWOF) Buildings will be posted on the City website. The purpose of the Framework Guidelines is to assist building owners and their engineers in the preparation of design documentation and to assist the City's plan checkers in their review of permit submittals. Until then, design professionals should follow the engineering standards outlined in Berkeley Municipal Code, Section 19.39.100.

If you would like to schedule a **pre-submission meeting** with Planning and Building and Safety staff before you submit your building permit application, contact (510) 981- 7451 once you have preliminary designs ready. This is especially encouraged if your retrofit will impact parking or if it has a commercial storefront.

Your engineer, architect or contractor should contact the **Permit Service Center** at (510) 981-7500 to find out how many sets of plans will be needed, depending on the use of the building, and to make an appointment to submit your building permit application.

Contact the **Rent Stabilization Board** at (510) 981-7368 if you would like to apply to pass on capital improvement expenses to your tenants. Only buildings where the majority of tenants have been in place since 1998 may qualify.

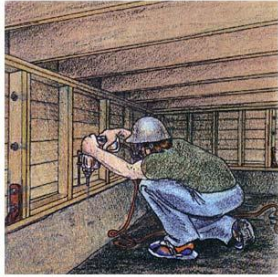
Make a Schedule:

Retain a design professional → Apply for financing, if needed → Submit plans → Obtain permit → Start work → Complete work.

Parking: Whenever possible, the City seeks to retain the maximum number of parking spaces, however, elimination of parking when necessary should not stand in the way of seismic retrofit work. Whether parking would be lost will depend on the retrofit design. The zoning regulations allow parking to be relocated or removed for public safety structural alterations if approved by the City Traffic Engineer per Berkeley Municipal Code Section 23C.04.075.

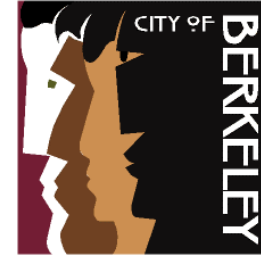
Accessibility: In rare cases where buildings have commercial space that will be impacted by the seismic work and the space is non-compliant, then the retrofit work may trigger disabled access upgrades to that commercial space. Accessibility improvements for existing buildings with commercial uses have been required by state law since 1973 and mandated in the California Building Code since 1982. The requirements are retroactive to existing buildings undergoing alterations or structural repairs requiring issuance of a building permit. It is not possible for the City of Berkeley to waive these requirements. Since these provisions were added almost 40 years ago many buildings with commercial uses have already been remodeled to be accessible. However, for commercial spaces that have not yet been upgraded for disabled access compliance, this still remains an issue. Even though compliance with disabled access requirements cannot be waived, the Building & Safety Division will consider hardship exemptions in those situations where the required accessibility work exceeds 20% of the cost of the seismic repairs.

How long do I have to comply? You must submit a building permit application to carry out the required retrofit by December 31, 2016. After submitting your application, you have two years to complete the retrofit work and obtain final inspection approval.



Impact on Tenants

The work specified by the ordinance will almost always be limited to the ground floor areas, minimizing the impact on residents of the building.



HOW DO I FIND:

An Engineer?

See roster of engineers on the City of Berkeley's website:

<http://cityofberkeley.info/softstory/>

You can also contact the Structural Engineers Association of Northern California: www.seaonc.org

An Architect?

If you are going to make additional nonstructural changes, or undertake additional upgrading other than seismic retrofit, you may want to hire an architect or your engineer can contract an architect.

Visit: www.aia.org

A Contractor?

The Contractors State Licensing Board has useful guidelines and you can verify contractor's licensing on their website:

<http://www.cslb.ca.gov/>

Your engineer may recommend a contractor to you. Ask if they have previously worked on similar seismic retrofit projects.

QUESTIONS: We are here to help. Call the Soft Story Program at (510) 981-7451.

Retrofitting your Soft, Weak or Open Front Building

What's Next?

The Soft Story Program

Building and Safety Division, City of Berkeley

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Berkeley, CA 94704

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Tel (510) 981-7451