Concrete Building Screening Form Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the goal of the Concrete Building Screening Program?

In 2025, Mayor Lurie signed legislation to better understand which buildings in the city may be vulnerable to earthquakes. This program aims to improve the City's inventory of two potentially vulnerable building types:

- Concrete buildings
- Rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragm (RWFD) buildings, also commonly referred to as tilt-up buildings

The City's definition of these two building types can be found in Chapter 5G of the San Francisco Existing Building Code (SFEBC). By identifying these buildings now, the City can better assess seismic risk and be more prepared to recover when the "Big One" comes.

Reference: San Francisco City Ordinance 70-25, San Francisco Existing Building Code, Chapter 5G

2. Which buildings are subject to the Concrete Building Screening Program?

Buildings that have received notices and are on the City's list of potential concrete or rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragm buildings must submit an online screening form. As the program progresses, we may identify additional properties that are subject to this program and add them to the list. Any property owners added to the list will be informed promptly of the program requirements.

Reference: San Francisco Existing Building Code, Chapter 5G. Subject Building is defined in 501G.2, 501G.3, and 501G.4.

3. Who can fill out the online screening form?

Building owners or their representatives are welcome to submit responses to the initial questions on the form, but the property owner will need to hire a California-licensed architect, civil engineer or structural engineer if required to answer additional questions.

Reference: San Francisco Existing Building Code, Chapter 5G. Exemptions for Concrete Buildings are in 501G.4. Exemptions for rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragms are in 501G.3.

4. What information does the screening form ask for?

The online screening form is designed to determine whether a building is a subject concrete or rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragm building, according to the criteria in the San Francisco Existing Building Code, Chapter 5G. Some questions can be answered by building owners, and others must be completed by their California-licensed architect, civil engineer or structural engineer. Once the form determines that a building is not a subject concrete or rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragm building according to the code,

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no further information is required. The form is designed as a decision tree, so you will see different questions based on your responses.

The form includes the following questions:

Answerable by owner, HOA, or agent:

- What is the fewest number of stories above grade plane, not counting mezzanines, for any portion of the building? What is the maximum number of stories above grade plane, not counting mezzanines, for any portion of the building?
- Was the building, or any portion of the building, originally constructed or permitted for construction before July 1, 1999?
- Is the total aggregate footprint area of the rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragm (one-story) portion of the building larger than 3,000 square feet?
- Does building permit documentation exist demonstrating that the building has been seismically retrofitted pursuant to Appendix A, Chapter A2 of the SFEBC?
- Does the building contain two or fewer residential units (R-3 occupancy)? The building may contain incidental Group U occupancy, such as sheds, private garages, carports, but it does not contain any commercial units.
- Is the building an unreinforced masonry building that was retrofitted as a part of a previous mandatory retrofit program?
- Does building permit documentation exist demonstrating that the building has been seismically retrofitted pursuant to one of the following?
    - Appendix A, Chapter A6 of the SFEBC
    - Section 304.3 of the 2022 SFEBC
    - Section 303.4 of the 2019 SFEBC
    - Section 301.2 of the 2016 SFEBC
    - Section 3401.10 of the 2013 SFBC
    - Section 3401.8 of the 2010 SFBC
    - Section 3403.5 of the 2007 SFBC

Answerable only by a California-licensed architect, civil engineer, or structural engineer:

- Does the building or building portion have a lateral-force-resisting system that would be classified by the latest edition of ASCE-41 as either precast or tilt-up concrete shear walls with flexible diaphragm (PC1), reinforced brick or concrete block masonry bearing walls with flexible diaphragm (RM1), or concrete shear walls with flexible diaphragm (C2a)?

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- Does the building, or any portion of the building, have vertical elements of concrete construction, such as walls or columns, that support gravity load from floors or roofs, thereby defining it as a concrete building? Does the building, or any portion of the building, have vertical elements of concrete construction that are part of the lateral-force-resisting system to define it as a concrete building?
- Do all concrete elements that define the building as a concrete building extend less than four feet above adjacent grade? In this scenario, the only concrete elements are floors or diaphragms, foundation walls, retaining walls, or incidental elements.
- Is the building of light-frame construction over a one-story concrete podium? For these types of buildings, all concrete elements extend no more than one story above grade plane and all stories above the concrete story consists of only light-frame, such as wood or cold-formed steel, construction.
- Does the building include concrete columns or wall piers, as defined in ACI 318 Section 2.3? Does the building have a structural reinforced concrete diaphragm at the second floor, the roof, or both?
- If there are steel columns in the building, do the steel columns support all the gravity floor load and roof load and are the steel columns connected to steel beams?
- Identify the Building Type per ASCE 41 Table 3-1.
- Provide the earliest date that the lateral-force-resisting system (LFRS) for the multi-story building, or portion of the multi-story building, was first permitted for construction.

Reference: San Francisco Existing Building Code, Chapter 5G. Subject Building is defined in 501G.2, 501G.3, and 501G.4.

5. What is the deadline to submit the online screening form?

The deadline for submission is June 9, 2027.

6. The result of the screening form is that my building is a subject concrete or rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragm building. How can I reduce my building's risk?

If you wish to seismically retrofit your building, we recommend the following two standards. Retrofits that meet the following standards remove a building from the program.

- Concrete buildings: You may complete a voluntary retrofit that meets the standards in Appendix A, Chapter A6 of the San Francisco Existing Building Code.
- Rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragm buildings: You may complete a voluntary retrofit that meets the standards in Appendix A, Chapter A2 of the California Existing Building Code.

References: San Francisco Existing Building Code, Appendix A, Chapter A6; California Existing Building Code, Appendix A, Chapter A2

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7. **Will there be a mandatory retrofit program in the future?**

   Potentially. The screening program will help the City understand the scope of the issue and whether new seismic requirements are needed. No mandatory retrofit program for concrete or rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragm buildings has been adopted at this time.

8. **How do I know if my building is a concrete or rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragm building?**

   Unless you are a California-licensed civil engineer, structural engineer, or architect, it may be difficult to determine this on your own. That's why most building owners will need to hire a professional to complete the screening form. The form itself is designed to guide professionals through the process of providing the relevant building information to determine if a building is a Subject Building.

   Reference: San Francisco Existing Building Code, Chapter 5G. Subject Building is defined in 501G.2, 501G.3, and 501G.4.

9. **Why did I receive a notice with an address that is different from the address I understand to be associated with my building?**

   Sometimes multiple addresses can be associated with a single building. You can check whether the notice was referring to your building by visiting sfplanninggis.org/pim. Look up the address on the notice and see if it pulls up your building.

10. **I am a partial owner of a building co-owned by multiple people or entities. Does each owner need to submit a separate form?**

    No. Only one screening form should be submitted per building.

11. **What happens if I don't comply?**

    Concrete and rigid-wall-flexible-diaphragm building owners who do not submit their building information will be automatically included in any potential mandatory retrofit program in the future.

12. **What if I have multiple buildings on the same parcel?**

    Please contact dbi.concrete@sfgov.org for instructions on how to submit additional screening forms for additional buildings on a parcel.

13. **What happens after I submit the screening form?**

    DBI will review the building and structural information provided on the screening form for accuracy and will contact the submitter about any missing or incorrect information.

    Once the screening form submission is determined to be complete and accurate, DBI will send the property owner a notice of compliance, and no further action is required at this time.

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14. What if I already completed a seismic retrofit?

If your building has already been retrofitted, you should still complete the screening form. Your California-licensed civil engineer, structural engineer, or architect should be prepared to provide information and documentation about the scope of the retrofit and compliance with applicable codes.

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