



City of Sebastopol

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Certified Access Specialist Program SB 1608

In 2003, Senate Bill 262 authorized the State Architect to establish and publicize a program for voluntary certification by the state of any person who meets specified criteria as a Certified Access Specialist. The voluntary Certified Access Specialist Program or CASp has been approved by the Office of Administrative Law and is now filed with the Secretary of State. This regulatory action became effective July 30, 2008. On February 22, 2008 Senate Bill 1608 was introduced by Senator Corbett. SB 1608 was signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on October 8th 2008 and became effective on January 1, 2009.

Senate Bill 1608 is a lengthy and comprehensive piece of legislation that adds several provisions to existing laws regarding construction-related disability access issues. It is a balanced piece of legislation protecting the disabled public and businesses alike. While it encourages property owners and operators to take proactive steps to ensure their properties comply with applicable access requirements, it also clarifies and amends disability access laws to reduce the unwarranted "drive-by" lawsuits that have plagued California for years.

If a permit applicant or member of the public requests consultation from a certified access specialist, the City may charge an amount limited to a reasonable hourly rate, an estimate of which shall be provided upon request in advance of the consultation. The City has retained a certified access specialist to conduct permitting and plan check services to review for compliance with state construction-related accessibility standards by a place of public accommodation with respect to new construction, including, but not limited to, projects relating to tenant improvements that may impact access.

Senate Bill 1608

SB 1608 requires local agencies to employ or retain Certified Access Specialists by specified dates. You may review the text of SB 1608 at:

http://leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/sen/sb_1601-1650/sb_1608_bill_20080928_chaptered.pdf