County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Department
Coastal Development Permit Exemption (CDX) Guidance

The Property Owner/Applicant should request staff confirmation of potential project eligibility for a Coastal Development Permit Exemption (CDX) as stipulated in the attached Worksheet. Staff confirmation of project eligibility may require informal or formal documentation, as determined by the Director of Planning and Building. The following are general guidelines for staff to determine the appropriate type of documentation for project eligibility for a CDX:

A. **Over-the-Counter (OTC) CDX**: No separate CDX fee or case is required; OTC exemptions are noted in the associated PLN or BLD case (under the Planning review). Project types:

   i. Projects eligible for a CDX per Category E - Single Family Residence Categorical Exclusion Area (SFEX): Houses, Additions, and ADUs in the SFEX area; Excludes projects on non-conforming properties, properties adjoining a Creek or wetland.

B. **Formal CDX**: Applicant submits form and relevant materials; Staff opens a formal CDX case (or can be combined with case opened for another permit) and charges the CDX fee*.

   i. Projects eligible for a CDX per any other Category other than SFEX or non-conforming parcel within the SFEX

      1. For straight-forward projects, a Senior Planner can authorize an OTC CDX

   ii. Projects eligible for a CDX when an encroachment permit is needed from DPW and no other Planning permit is needed. Example project types:

      1. Culvert
      2. Trash enclosure
      3. Driveway Replacements
      4. Road maintenance/re-paving

County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Department

Coastal Development Permit
EXEMPTION/EXCLUSION WORKSHEET
(Categorical Exclusion Order E-81-1)
(This is not a Certificate of Exemption)
(Last Updated: August 2025)

To be used by Planning Department staff in determining basis for exemption or exclusion from requirement for a Coastal Development Permit. Use boxes to check category of exclusion, blanks to note that applicable criteria are met.

☐ **A. <u>Existing Single-Family Residences (Not Mapped Categorical Exclusion Area)</u>**
Maintenance and alteration of, or addition to, existing single-family dwellings provided the project <u>does not</u> involve the following:

_____ 1. Improvements to a single-family structure if the structure or improvement is located on a beach, in a wetland, seaward of the mean high tide line, in an environmentally sensitive habitat area, in an area designated as highly scenic in a certified land use plan, or within 50 feet of the edge of a coastal bluff.[2]

_____ 2. Any significant alteration of landform, including removal or placement of vegetation, on a beach, wetland or sand dune, or within 50 feet of the edge of a coastal bluff.

_____ 3. The expansion or construction of water wells or septic systems.

_____ 4 Unless destroyed by natural disaster, the replacement of <u>50 percent</u>[1] or more of a single family residence, seawall, revetment, bluff retaining wall, breakwater, groin or any other structure is not repair and maintenance under Section 30610(d) (of the California Public Resources Code) is not repair or maintenance but instead constitutes a replacement structure requiring a coastal development permit.[2]

_____ 5. On property located between the sea and the first through, improved public road paralleling the sea, or within 300 feet of the inland extent of any beach or of the mean high tide of the sea where there is no beach, whichever is the greater distance, or in significant scenic resource areas as designated by the Coastal Commission or regional Commission, an improvement that would result in:

_____ a. An increase of 10 percent or more of internal floor area of an existing structure; or constitute an additional improvement of 10 percent or less where an improvement to the structure has previously been undertaken.[2]

_____ b. The construction of an additional story (including lofts) in an existing structure; or increase in height by more than 10 percent of an existing structure and or any significant non-attached structure such as garages, fences, shoreline protective works or docks.[2]

_____ c. The construction or installation of any significant non-attached structure such as garages, fences, shoreline protective work, docks, or trees.

_____ 6. On property located in a County or State scenic road corridor, an improvement that would result in:

_____ a. An increase of 10 percent or more of internal floor area of an existing structure;

_____ b. The construction of an additional story (including lofts) in an existing structure; or,

_____ c. The construction or installation of any significant non-attached structure such as garages, fences, shoreline protective work, docks, or trees.

_____ 7. In areas determined to have a critically short water supply that must be maintained for the protection of coastal resources or public recreational use, the construction of any specified major water using development not essential to residential use including, but not limited to, swimming pools, or the construction or extension of any landscaping irrigation system.

☐ **B. <u>Existing Structures Other Than Single-Family Residences or Public Works Facilities</u>**
The maintenance and alteration of, or addition to, existing structures other than single-family dwellings and public works facilities provided the project <u>does not</u> involve the following:

_____ 1. Improvement to any structure if the structure or the improvement is located: on a beach; in a wetland, stream, or lake; seaward of the mean high tide line; in an area designated as highly scenic in a certified land use plan; or within 50 feet of the edge of a coastal bluff.[2]

_____ 2. Any significant alteration of landforms, including removal or placement of vegetation, on a beach, wetland or sand dune, or within 100 feet of the edge of a coastal bluff or stream or in areas of natural vegetation designated as a sensitive habitat.

_____ 3. The expansion or construction of water wells or septic systems.

_____ 4 Unless destroyed by natural disaster, the replacement of <u>50 percent</u> or more of a seawall, revetment, bluff retaining wall, breakwater, groin or any other structure is not repair and maintenance under Section 30610(d) (of the California Public Resources Code) is not repair or maintenance but instead constitutes a replacement structure requiring a coastal development permit.[2]

_____ 5. On property located between the sea and the first through, improved public road paralleling the sea, or within 300 feet of the inland extent of any beach or of the mean high tide of the sea where there is no beach, whichever is the greater distance, or in significant scenic resource areas as designated by the Coastal Commission or regional Commission, an improvement that would result in:

_____ a. An increase of 10 percent or more of internal floor area of an existing structure; or

_____ constitute an additional improvement of 10 percent or less where an improvement to the structure has previously been undertaken.[2]

_____ b. The construction of an additional story (including lofts) in an existing structure; or increase in height by more than 10 percent of an existing structure and or any significant non-attached structure such as garages, fences, shoreline protective works or docks.[2]

_____ 6. On property located in a County or State scenic road corridor, an improvement that would result in:

_____ a. An increase of 10 percent or more of internal floor area of an existing structure; or,

_____ b. The construction of an additional story (including lofts) in an existing structure.

_____ 7. In areas determined to have a critically short water supply that must be maintained for the protection of coastal resources or public recreational use, the construction of any specified major water using development not essential to residential use including, but not limited to, swimming pools, or the construction or extension of any landscaping irrigation system.

_____ 8. Any improvement to a structure which changes the intensity of use of the structure.

_____ 9. Any improvement made pursuant to conversion of an existing structure from a multiple unit rental use or visitor-servicing commercial use to a use involving a fee ownership or long-term leasehold including, but not limited to, a condominium conversion, stock cooperative conversion or motel/hotel time sharing conversion.

☐ **C. <u>Existing Navigation Channels</u>**

Maintenance, dredging of existing navigation channels or moving dredged material from such channels to a disposal area outside the Coastal Zone, pursuant to a permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, that does not involve the following:[2]

_____ 1. The dredging of 100,000 cubic yards or more within a twelve (12) month period.

_____ 2. The placement of dredged spoils of any quantity within an environmentally sensitive area, or any sandy area, within 50 feet of the edge of coastal waters or streams; or

_____ 3. The removal, sale, or disposal of dredged spoils of any quantity that would be suitable for beach nourishment in an area the commission has declared by resolution to have a critically short sand supply that must be maintained for protection of structures, coastal access, or public recreational use.

☐ **D. <u>Repair or Maintenance Activities</u>**

Repair or maintenance activities that do not result in an addition to or enlargement or expansion of, the object of such repair or maintenance activities, provided the project <u>does not</u> involve the following:

_____ 1. Any method of repair or maintenance of a seawall, revetment, bluff retaining wall, breakwater, groin, or similar shoreline work that involves:

_____ a. Substantial alteration of the foundation of the protective work, including pilings and other surface or subsurface structures.

_____ b. The placement, whether temporary or permanent, of riprap, artificial berms of sand or other beach materials, or any other forms of solid materials, on a beach or in coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries and lakes or on a shoreline protective work.

_____ c. The replacement of 20 percent or more of the materials of an existing structure with materials of a different kind.

_____ d. The presence, whether temporary or permanent, of mechanized construction equipment or construction materials on any sand area or bluff or within 20 feet of coastal waters or streams.

_____ 2. Any repair or maintenance to facilities or structures or work located in an environmentally sensitive habitat area, any sand area, within 50 feet of the edge of a coastal bluff or environmentally sensitive habitat area, or within 20 feet of coastal waters or streams that include:.[2]

_____ a. The placement or removal, whether temporary or permanent, of rip-rap, rocks, sand or other beach materials or any other forms of solid materials;

_____ b. The presence, whether temporary or permanent, of mechanized equipment. or construction materials

_____ 3. Unless destroyed by natural disaster, the replacement of 50 percent or more of a single family residence, seawall, revetment, bluff retaining wall, breakwater, groin or any other structure is not repair and maintenance under Section 30610(d) but instead constitutes a replacement structure requiring a coastal development permit.[2]

☐ **E. <u>Single-Family Residence Categorical Exclusion Area</u>**

Construction, reconstruction, demolition, repair, maintenance, alteration of, or addition to, any single-family residence or accessory building provided:

_____ 1. The project is located within the area designated on Single-Family Residence Exclusion Area Maps.

_____ 2. The project and the parcel(s) or lot(s) on which it is located conform to regulations of the underlying zoning district.

_____ 3. No variance is required.

_____ 4. Any required Design Review (DR) District approvals are obtained.

5. Any required geologic report approvals are obtained in designated geologic hazard

areas (LCP Policy 9.10).

☐ **F. <u>Agriculturally-Related Development Categorical Exclusion Area</u>**

The agriculturally-related development listed below is excluded. For the purposes of this exclusion, "agriculturally-related development" does not include any residential use, equestrian or other recreational facility, kennel, produce sales building, aquaculture facility, winery or woodlot. This exemption does not apply to any historic structure or to the demolition of any building.

NOTE:

All projects listed below must be located within the area designated on Agricultural Exclusion Area Maps and <u>must not be located in any hazardous area</u> designated on LCP Hazard Maps.

1. The construction, improvement or expansion of barns, storage buildings, equipment buildings and other buildings necessary for agricultural support purposes, provided such buildings:

   a. Do not exceed 36 feet in height.

   b. Do not cover more than 10,000 square feet of ground area.

   c. Do not include agricultural processing plants, greenhouses or mushroom farms.

   d. Are not located within the Coastal Commission appeal jurisdiction as shown on Coastal Commission Jurisdictional Maps (Adopted language: Are not located within 100 feet of blue line streams (dashed or solid) on USGS 7 ½-minute quadrangle maps).

   e. Are not located within 100 feet of any wetland meeting the definition of Local Coastal Program policy 7.14 (E-81-1 Condition 1).

   f. Are not located on a slope of over 30 percent.

2. Improvement and expansion of existing agriculturally-related processing plants, mushroom farms or greenhouses provided such facilities:

   a. Are not located on Prime Agricultural Land.

   b. Existing soil dependent greenhouses not on Prime Agricultural Land provided that such improvements do not exceed 36 feet in height or increase ground coverage by more than 25 percent or 10,000 square feet, whichever is less.

3. Paving in association with development listed in paragraphs 1, and 2, above, provided it is included within applicable ground cover limits and does not exceed 10 percent of the ground area covered by the development.

4. Fences for farm or ranch purposes, provided such fences:

   a. Are not solid or chain link.

b. Do not block existing equestrian or pedestrian trails.

5. New water wells sited outside of the Pillar Point Marsh groundwater basin watershed as depicted on Exhibit 1, well covers, pump houses, water storage tanks of less than 10,000 gallons capacity and water distribution lines, including up to 50 cubic yards of associated grading, provided such water facilities are used for on-site agriculturally-related purposes only. Replacement wells sited within the Pillar Point Marsh groundwater basin watershed are excluded from the requirement to obtain Coastal Development Permits, subject to the following:

Pillar Point Marsh Groundwater Basin only:

a. There would need to be a demonstration that an existing well had failed. The. existing well would need to be properly abandoned. The water from the replacement well would be limited to on-site agricultural use

b. The replacement well would be conditioned to limit its pumping to an amount not. to exceed the original well

c. The location of the replacement well shall not be within the mapped geologic. hazards area nor within the required setbacks from streams, and must be located a sufficient distance from existing public water supply wells to avoid any interference

d. Metering and monitoring (regular reporting to San Mateo County and the Coastal Commission) shall be required.

6. Water impoundments located in drainage areas not identified as blue line streams (dashed or solid) on USGS 7-1/2 minute quadrangle maps, provided such improvements do not exceed 25 acre feet in capacity and any required grading permits are obtained.

7. Water pollution control facilities for agricultural purposes provided such facilities are constructed to comply with waste discharge requirements or other orders of the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

☐ **G. <u>Utility Connections</u>**

The installation, testing, and placement in service or the replacement of any necessary utility connection between an existing service facility and any development, provided that the County may, where necessary, require reasonable conditions to mitigate any adverse impacts on coastal resources, including scenic resources.

☐ **H. <u>Replacement of Structures Following Disaster</u>**

The replacement of any structure, other than a public works facility, destroyed by disaster (any situation in which the force or forces which destroyed the structure to be replaced were beyond the control of its owner), provided such replacement structure:

1. Shall conform to zoning requirements applicable at time of replacement.

_____

_____ 2. Shall be for the same use as the destroyed structure.

_____ 3. Shall not exceed either the floor area, height, or bulk of the destroyed structure by more than 10% ("bulk" means total interior cubic volume as measured from the exterior surface of the structure).

_____ 4. Shall be sited in the same location on the effected property as the destroyed structure.

☐ **I. <u>Emergency Activities</u>**

Projects normally requiring a Coastal Development Permit which are undertaken by a public agency, public utility or person performing a public service as emergency measures to protect life and property from imminent danger or to restore, repair or maintain public works, utilities and services during and immediately following a natural disaster or serious accident, provided such projects are reported to the Community Development Director and an application for a Coastal Development Permit is submitted within five days.

☐ **J. <u>Land Division for Public Recreation</u>**

Land division brought about in connection with the purchase of land by a public agency for public recreational use.

1. A residence shall be considered redeveloped if alteration (including demolition, renovation, replacement, and addition) of 50% or more of the major structural components, or alteration that leads to a 50% or more increase in gross floor area, has occurred or is proposed. Major structural components mean exterior walls, floor structures, roof structures, and foundations. The 50% threshold applies to individual components of these only and is not additive between differing components. The residence shall also be considered redeveloped if the cost of any alterations to the residence and related development equals or exceeds 50% of the market value of the residence at the start of construction, based on the documented construction bid costs and either appraisal by a professional appraiser or San Mateo County data.

   <u>An exterior wall</u> is considered to be altered 50% or more when any of the following occur: (a) exterior cladding and/or framing systems are altered in a manner that requires removal and/or replacement of 50% or more of the elements of those cladding and framing systems, normally considered as linear length of wall; and/or (b) reinforcement is needed for any remaining portions of the wall to provide structural support in excess of 50% of existing support elements (e.g., addition of 50% or more of beams, shear walls, or studs whether alone or alongside the existing/retained elements, etc.)

   <u>A floor or roof structure</u> is considered to be altered 50% or more when any of the following occur: (a) the roof or floor framing is altered in a manner that requires removal and/or replacement of structural elements (e.g., trusses, joists, shear components, rafters, roof/floor structural surface (e.g., plywood), etc.) supporting 50% or more of the square footage of the roof or floor; and/or (b) the roof or floor structural framing system requires additional reinforcement to any remaining portions of the roof or floor system to provide structural support (e.g., addition of 50% or more of beams, joists, shear components, rafters, roof/floor structural surface (e.g., plywood), etc., whether alone or alongside existing/retained system elements).

   <u>A foundation</u> is considered to be altered 50% or more when any work is done on any of the following: (a) 50% or more of the horizontal surface area of a slab foundation; (b) 50% or more of the floor area of a structure supported by a pier/post and/or caisson/grade beam foundation; and/or (c) 50% or more of a perimeter foundation.

   Major structural component alterations not covered above generally do not include changes to roof coverings; replacement of glass or doors in existing window or door openings; replacement of window or door framing when the size and location of the window/door remains unchanged; repair of roofs or foundations without any change to structural supporting elements; changes to exterior siding; repair, maintenance, and replacement of chimneys; and interior changes to non-structural interior walls and sheetrock, insulation, fixtures, and mechanical, electrical and plumbing elements.

2. Added in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 5.5, Chapter 6 – Exclusions from Permit Requirements.