

## PORT CODE PROCEDURE

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**NO. PCP-014**

**DATE** : December 5, 2012; revised 1/9/2020, 1/1/2026

**SUBJECT** : Inspection

**TITLE** : Special Inspection and Structural Observation Procedures

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**PURPOSE** : The purpose of this Port Code Procedure is to describe the procedures to be used in the administration and enforcement of special inspection and structural observation requirements of the Port of San Francisco Building Code (PSFBC). It is intended as an aid for design professionals in their preparation of inspection and observation programs. It provides information for project owners, architects and engineers, contractors, and special inspection agencies about their responsibilities regarding special inspection and structural observation and includes standardized forms and formats applicable to these functions. Good communication between the special inspector and the designers, contractor, and building department is essential to project quality assurance.

**REFERENCE** : Current edition of the Port of San Francisco Building Code

- Section 108A Inspections
- Chapter 17 Structural Tests and Inspections

**DEFINITIONS** : For the purposes of this Port Code Procedure, the following definitions apply:

1. **Special Inspection** is the monitoring of the materials and workmanship that are critical to the integrity of the building structure or public safety. Special inspection is the review of the work of the contractors and their employees to ensure that the approved plans and specifications are being followed and that relevant codes and ordinances are being observed. The special inspection process is in addition to the regular inspections conducted by Port of San Francisco building inspectors and by the engineer or architect of record as part of periodic structural observation. The special inspectors furnish continuous or periodic inspection as required by the Port of San Francisco Building Code.
2. **Structural Observation** is defined as the visual observation of the structural system for general conformance to the approved plans and specifications at significant construction stages and at completion of the structural system. Structural observation does not include or waive the responsibility for the inspections required by Section 108A, Chapter 17, and other sections of this code.

**DUTIES** : Duties and responsibilities of the parties responsible for special inspection program and structural observation program include the following:

1. **PROJECT OWNER**
  - a. The project owner, or the project owner's agent, is responsible for funding special inspection services.
  - b. The project owner, or the project owner's authorized agent, shall employ a registered design professional or another registered design professional designated by the registered design professional in responsible charge of the structural design to be responsible for the structural design, and to perform structural observation.

- c. Before final building inspection, the project owner, or the project owner's agent, shall submit to the Port of San Francisco final compliance reports covering each item requiring special inspection and structural observation. Final special inspection compliance reports shall be stamped and signed by the registered design professional in responsible charge of the special inspection agency. Final structural or geotechnical observation compliance report shall be stamped and signed by registered design professional in responsible charge. See Exhibit No. 2, Special Inspection Final Compliance Report and Exhibit No. 3, Structural Observation Final Compliance Report. Submissions may be made to the Building Permit desk or in electronic form to "[special-inspections@sfport.com](mailto:special-inspections@sfport.com)"
2. REGISTERED DESIGN PROFESSION IN RESPONSIBLE CHARGE

The registered design professional in responsible charge must be a California registered civil or structural engineer or architect and has many duties and responsibilities related to special inspection and structural observation activities. These include the following:

  - a. Identify the need for special inspection and structural observation services. The registered design professional in responsible charge prepares *Statement of Special Inspections* (See Exhibit No. 1) in accordance with Chapter 17 of the PSFBC. The Statement of Special Inspection shall be attached to each set of project plans and specifications which are submitted to the Chief Harbor Engineer as part of building permit application. In addition, provide an electronic version to "[special-inspections@sfport.com](mailto:special-inspections@sfport.com)".
  - b. Review reports from special inspection agencies/special inspectors/structural observer and respond to field discrepancies. The registered design professional reviews all structural observation and special inspection reports. Material and design discrepancies which are not resolved in a timely manner or are about to be incorporated in the work must be brought to the attention of the registered design professional in responsible charge and the Chief Harbor Engineer. Uncorrected field deficiencies observed by the special inspector and structural observer must be brought to their attention. The registered design professional in responsible charge is instrumental in effecting the remedial process of deficiency correction. The registered design professional in responsible charge is responsible for any design changes in addition to acknowledgment and approval of changes due to the field discrepancies which may detail structural information, and such changes shall be submitted to the Chief Harbor Engineer for approval prior to executing the change in the field.
3. REGISTERED DESIGN PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STRUCTURAL OBSERVATION PROGRAM

The owner shall employ a registered design professional (Civil or Structural) to perform structural observation as defined in PSFBC Chapter 17. The registered design professional assigned to perform structural observation shall submit to the Port Building Department and the registered design professional in responsible charge, a written statement declaring that the site visits have been made and identify any reported deficiencies that, to the best of his/her knowledge, have not been resolved. See Exhibit No. 3 - Special Observation Final Compliance Report.

#### 4. SPECIAL INSPECTION AGENCIES/SPECIAL INSPECTORS

The special inspectors are qualified person employed or retained by an approved agency and approved by the building official as having the competence necessary to inspect a particular type of construction requiring special inspection. Duties of the special inspectors and/or inspection agencies include the following:

- a. Inspection preparations: Review necessary plans, specifications, shop drawings and relevant submittals.
- b. Prepare all necessary equipment for a special inspection: Verify calibration dates for all required test equipment
- c. Special Inspections: Perform all special inspections outlined in the Port of San Francisco approved set of plans and specifications and applicable provisions of the PSFBC.
- d. Non-conformance: Special inspectors shall bring all non-conforming items to the immediate attention of the contractor. If any such item is not resolved in a timely manner or is about to be incorporated in the work, the registered design professional in responsible charge and the Port Building Department shall be notified immediately.
- e. Develop Special Inspector's Report: The special inspector shall complete written inspection reports in compliance with Section 1704.2.4 of PSFBC for each inspection visit and provide the reports in a timely manner.
- f. Submit Special Inspection Report: The special inspector or inspection agency shall furnish these reports directly to the Port Building Department (by email at [special-inspections@sfport.com](mailto:special-inspections@sfport.com)) and the registered design professional in responsible charge. A copy of these reports shall also be kept at job site.
- g. Final Special Inspection report (affidavit): Special inspectors or special inspection agencies shall submit a final report ('affidavit') signed by a California registered design professional (civil or structural), who is responsible for the special inspection, to the Port Building Department (by email at [special-inspections@sfport.com](mailto:special-inspections@sfport.com)) and the registered design professional in responsible charge stating (itemized) that all items requiring special inspection and testing were constructed, to the best of their knowledge, in conformance with the approved design drawings, specifications, approved change orders and the applicable provisions of the code. See Exhibit No. 2 - *Special Inspection Final Compliance Report ('affidavit')*.

#### 5. CHIEF HARBOR ENGINEER

- a. Review and examine plans, specifications and contract documents for compliance with special inspection and structural observation requirements. The Chief Harbor Engineer is charged with the legal authority to review the plans and specifications for compliance with the code requirements.
- b. Monitor the special inspection and structural observation activities. The Chief Harbor Engineer shall monitor the job site to see that special inspection and structural observation is being performed and that an adequate number of special inspection staff is present depending upon the extent and complexity of the project.

- c. Review inspection reports. The Chief Harbor Engineer receives, reviews and makes the inspection reports part of the inspection records.
- d. Review the final report ('affidavit'). The Certificate of Occupancy shall not be issued until the final report ('affidavit') has been received and approved by the Chief Harbor Engineer.

6. CONTRACTOR

- a. Notify and schedule the special inspector. The contractor is responsible for notifying the special inspector or special inspection agency regarding special inspections required by the Port of San Francisco. Adequate notice shall be provided so that the special inspector has time to become familiar with the project.
- b. Provide access to approved plans. The contractor is responsible for providing the special inspector with access to approved plans at the job site.
- c. Retain special inspection records. The contractor is responsible for retaining at the job site all special inspection records submitted by the special inspector, and providing these records for review by the Port of San Francisco building inspector upon request.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** The Port of San Francisco Building Department will accept special inspection and testing agencies working on projects in the Port of San Francisco who are recognized by the International Code Committee ('ICC') Special Inspection Joint Review Committee of participating Bay Area jurisdictions, which reviews the qualifications of inspection and testing agencies including conformance with ASTM E329 and inspector certification and experience criteria. The current list of the Joint Review Committee's Recognized Special Inspection and Testing Agencies is available on the Port of San Francisco website.

1. SPECIAL INSPECTOR

Qualified staff of the City and County of San Francisco working on Port projects may also perform special inspection work.

Alternatively, special inspectors shall be one of the following:

- a. A qualified person employed by an approved inspection and testing agency conforming insofar as applicable to the requirements of ASTM E329.
- b. Except for testing of materials and reporting of numerical results from such tests, the inspector shall work under the general supervision of a registered Civil Engineer, and all reports and certification of compliance must be signed by the engineer.
- c. The registered design professional in responsible charge and engineers of record involved in the design of the project are permitted to act as the approved agency and their personnel are permitted to act as special inspectors for the work designed by them, provided they qualify as special inspectors.
- d. The registered design professional in responsible charge and engineers of record involved in the design of the project are permitted to act as the approved agency and their personnel are permitted to act as special inspectors for the work designed by them, provided they qualify as special inspectors.

- e. For life-safety provisions required by PSFBC Section 403, construction review and validation testing shall be performed by, or under the supervision of a registered Electrical or Mechanical Engineer responsible for those areas of work involving his or her design. All reports on construction review and testing, and certification of compliance and full operational status, shall be signed by the engineer and endorsed by the design professional of record for the building. The design professional of record shall bear overall responsibility for the proper installation and testing of the life-safety system. When approved by the Chief Harbor Engineer this responsibility may be borne by an approved independent testing agency.
- f. Registered design professionals in responsible charge per discipline:
  - (1) Structural/Civil:
  - (2) Architecture:
  - (3) Electrical:
  - (4) Mechanical:
- Note: The engineer who prepared the geotechnical report may be considered the registered design professional in responsible charge for the geotechnical work requiring special inspection.
- g. For special inspection of fabricated items, see PSFBC Section 1704.2.5.

**PROCEDURES :** Special inspection and structural observation operational procedure within engineering division's building permit group include the following:

1. BUILDING PERMIT GROUP (BPG) - PLAN REVIEW ENGINEERS/INSPECTORS
  - a. Review the special inspection and structural observation requirements in Statement of Special Inspection (Exhibit No. 1) prepared by the registered design professional in responsible charge. During construction, the BPG reviews and files special inspection progress reports received by email at "special-inspections@sfport.com". Resolution reports shall be submitted to BPG for review and file.
  - b. Before final building inspection approval, the project owner/ project owner's agent submits to the Building Permit Group final compliance reports ('affidavits') covering each item requiring special inspection and structural observation. Final reports ('affidavits') shall be signed and stamped by the registered design professional in responsible charge of the special inspection agency, geotechnical firm, engineer or architect of record - as appropriate to the type(s) of special inspection. See Exhibit No. 2, *Special Inspection Final Compliance Report ('affidavit'* and Exhibit No. 3, *Structural Observation Final Compliance Report ('affidavit')*. Documents shall be sent by email to "special-inspections@sfport.com"
  - c. When final reports are submitted, the BPG will review the documents for compliance and completeness. If documentation is not sufficient, the BPG informs the registered design professional in responsible charge regarding what items are missing.
  - d. The BPG files the final compliance approval in the Special Inspection file.
  - e. The Chief Building Inspector or designee confirms that the necessary special inspection and structural observation work has

been completed and notifies the building inspectors that final inspection and permit close out can be completed.

2. BUILDING INSPECTION

- a. For projects requiring special inspection, at the first site inspection, building inspectors inform the applicant or applicant's agent of the Special Inspection procedures and discuss the requirements with the person in charge of the work. The Special Inspector shall be identified to building inspector prior to start of the work for which special inspection is required. See Exhibit No. 1, *Statement of Special Inspections*.
- b. Building inspectors monitor the special inspection activities at the project site for compliance with this procedure. In the event that building inspectors discover that required special inspection is not being performed, or not in compliance with the approved plans, they are authorized to suspend or stop the progress of the work.



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1/1/2026

Date

Matthew Bell  
Acting Chief Harbor Engineer  
Port of San Francisco

Update reviewed and approved by Matthew Bell, Acting Chief Harbor Engineer January 1, 2026

**ATTACHMENT “A” Exhibit No. 1-Statement of Special Inspections**

*The checklist provided on the second page may be used when it sufficiently covers the scope of required special inspections. Complex projects may require a longer and more detailed checklist. The Structural Engineer’s Association of Northern California (SEAONC) provides an editable Model Statement of Special Inspection that may be used in lieu of the Port’s checklist for more complex projects.*

## Exhibit No. 1 Statement of Special Inspections

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PROJECT NAME\_\_\_\_\_

PERMIT NO.\_\_\_\_\_

This Statement of Special Inspections is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of PSFBC Chapter 17. Included are:

- Schedule of Special Inspections and tests applicable to this project;
- List of the Testing Agencies and other special inspectors that will be retained to conduct the tests and inspections.

Special Inspections and Testing will be performed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications, this statement and PSFBC Chapter 17

The Schedule of Special Inspections summarizes the Special Inspections and tests required. Special Inspectors will refer to the approved plans and specifications for detailed special inspection requirements. Any additional tests and inspections required by the approved plans and specifications will also be performed.

Interim reports will be submitted to the Chief Harbor Engineer and the Registered Design Professional in Responsible Charge in accordance with PSFBC Chapter 17

A Final Report of Special Inspections documenting required Special Inspections, testing and correction of any discrepancies noted in the inspections shall be submitted prior to issuance of a Certificate of Final Completion and Occupancy (Section 109A.1, 109A.3, 1704.2.4). A Certificate of Temporary Occupancy (Section 109A.4) may be issued with written approval of the Chief Harbor Engineer. The Final Report will document:

Required special inspections.

- Correction of discrepancies noted in inspections.

The Project Owner recognizes his or her obligation to ensure that the construction complies with the approved permit documents and to implement this program of special inspections. In partial fulfillment of these obligations, the Project Owner will retain and directly pay for the Special Inspections as required in PSFBC Chapter 17.

This plan has been developed with the understanding that the Chief Harbor Engineer will:

- Review and approve the qualifications of the Special Inspectors who will perform the inspections.
- Monitor special inspection activities on the job site to assure that the Special Inspectors are qualified and are performing their duties as called for in this Statement of Special Inspection.
- Review submitted inspection reports.
- Perform inspections as required by the local building code.

PROJECT NAME\_\_\_\_\_

PERMIT NO.\_\_\_\_\_

The following are the testing agencies and special inspectors that will be retained to conduct tests and inspection on this project.

Responsibility	Firm (or Registered Professional)	Address, Telephone, e-mail
1. Special Inspection (except for geotechnical)		
2. Geotechnical Inspections		
3. Structural Observation		

In accordance with Chapter 17 (PSFBC), Special Inspection and/or testing is required for the following work:

1.  Concrete (Placement & sampling)  
 2.  Bolts installed in concrete  
 3.  Special moment - Resisting concrete frame  
 4.  Reinforcing steel and prestressing tendons  
 5. **Structural welding:**

- A. Periodic visual inspection**
  - i  Single pass fillet welds 5/16" or smaller
  - ii  Steel deck
  - iii  Welded studs
  - iv  Cold formed studs and joists
  - v  Stair and railing systems
  - vi  Reinforcing steel
- B. Continuous visual inspection and NDT** (Section 1705.2)
  - i  All other welding (NDT exception: Fillet
  - ii  Reinforcing steel; and  NDT required
  - iii  Moment-resisting frames
  - iv  Others \_\_\_\_\_

6.  High-strength bolting  
 7.  Structural masonry  
 8.  Reinforced gypsum concrete  
 9.  Insulating concrete fill  
 10.  Sprayed-on fireproofing  
 11.  Piling, drilled piers and caissons  
 12.  Shotcrete  
 13.  Special grading, excavation and filling (Geo. Engineered)  
 14.  Smoke-control system  
 15.  Demolition  
 16.  Exterior Facing  
 17. **Not used (UMB)**

**18. Bolts Installed in existing concrete or masonry:**  
 Concrete  Masonry  Pull/torque tests

19.  Shear walls and floor systems used as shear diagrams  
 20.  Hold-downs  
**21. Special cases:**

- i  Shoring
- ii  Underpinning:  Not affecting adjacent
- iii  Affecting adjacent property:
- iv  Others

22.  Crane safety (Apply to the operation of tower cranes on high-rise building) (Section 1705.21)  
 23.  Others: "As recommended by professional of record" \_\_\_\_\_

24. **Structural observation per Sec. 1704.6 for the following:**  Foundations  Steel framing  
 Concrete construction  Masonry construction  Wood framing  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

25. Certification is required for:  Glu-lam components  
 26.  Firestops in high-rise building

Prepared by: Registered Design Professional in Responsible Charge (printed name):	Project Owner's Authorization: Project Owner (printed name):		
<b>Signature</b>	Date	<b>Signature</b>	Date

**ATTACHMENT “B” Special Inspection Final Compliance Report ('Affidavit')**

**Exhibit No. 2**  
**SPECIAL INSPECTION FINAL COMPLIANCE REPORT**  
**('AFFIDAVIT')**

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[Date]

Building Permit Desk  
Port of San Francisco Engineering Division Building Permit Group  
Pier 1, The Embarcadero San Francisco, CA 94111

Building Permit No.

Re: Project Name:

In accordance with Chapter 17 of the 2025 Port of San Francisco Building Code, Special Inspection has been provided for items as specified in the Statement of Special Inspections (Exhibit No. 1): (please itemize)

Based upon inspections performed and my substantiating reports, it is my professional judgment that, to the best of my knowledge, the inspected work was performed in accordance with the approved plans, specifications, and applicable workmanship provisions of the Port of San Francisco Building Code.

Printed Name:

Agency:

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Signature

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Date

cc: Client/Project Owner

**ATTACHMENT “C” Structural Observation Final Compliance Report  
(‘Affidavit’)**

**Exhibit No. 3**  
**STRUCTURAL OBSERVATION FINAL COMPLIANCE REPORT**  
**('AFFIDAVIT')**

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[Date]

Building Permit Desk  
Port of San Francisco Engineering Division Building Permit Group  
Pier 1, The Embarcadero San Francisco, CA 94111

Building Permit No.

Re: Project Name:

In accordance with Chapter 17 of the 2025 Port of San Francisco Building Code, I have provided structural observation for items as specified in the Statement of Special Inspections (Exhibit No. 1):

Based upon inspections performed and my substantiating reports, it is my professional judgment that, to the best of my knowledge, the observed structural work was performed in accordance with the approved plans, specifications, and applicable workmanship provisions of the Port of San Francisco Building Code.

By Registered Design Professional (printed name):

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Signature

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Date

cc: Client/Project Owner