



Edmund G. Brown Jr.
GOVERNOR

CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTS BOARD

PUBLIC PROTECTION THROUGH EXAMINATION, LICENSURE, AND REGULATION

June 21, 2016

Mr. Michael F. Malinowski AIA
President, The American Institute of Architects,
California Council
c/o Applied Architecture, Inc.
2550 X Street
Sacramento, CA 95818

RE: Stamp and Signature Requirement for Architects

Dear Mr. Malinowski:

As an Architect Consultant to the California Architects Board (Board), I was asked to provide a written response/opinion to the following question: "Does the Architects Practice Act require an architect's stamp and signature be 'wet'?"

For over 40 years, the California Architects Practice Act (Act), Business and Professions Code section (BPC) 5536.1 has required all "*...persons preparing or being in responsible control of plans, specifications and instruments of service for others shall sign those plans, specifications and instruments of service...*" and if certified or registered, provide their certificate or registration number.

In 1990, BPC 5536.1 was amended to add the requirement that if the person is licensed as an architect, then the person "*...shall affix a stamp which complies with subdivision (b) as evidence of the person's responsibility...*" for the documents. Notice in the referenced section of the Act, there is no specificity on **when or how** the required stamp and signature are to be "affixed" to the person's documents and instruments of service.

The Board has not adopted any rules or regulations requiring either the stamp or signature to be "wet" or of any particular color; and, the Board has not adopted any rules or regulations prohibiting the use of electronic (digital) stamps and signatures. In the late 1990s, there was a strong effort by building departments to implement electronic (digital) processing of permits, including submittal of construction documents. There was no opposition to this by the Board at that time and there is no anticipated opposition to the concept in the future. The Board continues to uphold the acceptability of electronic (digital) stamps and signatures by California licensees.

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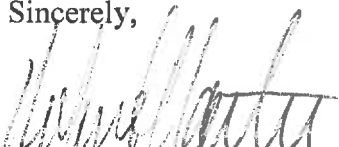
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The "wet" signature requirement may be a holdover from the days before there was a stamp requirement and there were not alternate ways to verify who was responsible for documents and instruments of service. In meetings with California Building Officials, we stress that requiring "wet" signatures on plans is a bit archaic and cumbersome, especially when many jurisdictions now require multiple sets of plans (up to 12 or more) for planning and plan check submittals. Most officials are now open to reproduced stamps and signatures (including electronic).

For information regarding the Act, please visit the Board's website at www.cab.ca.gov under Publications. If you have any questions, please contact me at (916) 575-7210.

Sincerely,



ROBERT L. CARTER, AIA
Architect Consultant