

INTERIOR DESIGN IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Alaska commercial interior designers work within public and private buildings in a variety of building occupant types and project sectors. These include corporate, professional office, healthcare, hospitality, government, educational, civic and transportation.

The practice of commercial interior design includes any of the following services affecting public health or life-safety and thus requires registration as a qualified interior designer:

Interior space analysis, planning, design, documentation:

- a. Interior occupant loads, circulation and exiting: number and location of suite exits, internal path of travel distance and width, accessible movement within suites and to exits via exit access components
- b. Interior finish materials/systems: flame spread, smoke density, slip resistance coefficient, infection control
- c. Interior furnishings, fixtures, equipment: combustibility, smoke propagation, bracing, clearances, disinfection protocols
- d. Interior non-bearing construction documents

AREA OF HEALTH, SAFETY, & WELFARE IMPACT & DESCRIPTION		HEALTH	SAFETY	WELFARE
1.	Interior Occupant Loads		✓	
2.	Interior Space Design, Circulation & Exiting		✓	
3.	Path of Travel, Widths and Distance to Exit		✓	
4.	Interior Signage Systems, Exiting & Accessibility (ADA)		✓	
5.	Emergency Lighting Locations		✓	
6.	Annunciators, Strobes, Fire Extinguisher Locations		✓	
7.	Finish Materials and Furnishings: Flammability, Flame Spread, Smoke Density, Smoke Propagation, Slip-Resistance		✓	
8.	Accessibility Standards and Universal Design		✓	✓
9.	Anthropometrics (human body size and shape)	✓		✓
10.	Ergonomics (humans in working environments)	✓		✓
11.	Acoustics, Sound Transfer and Mitigation	✓		✓
12.	Lighting Management (glare control, daylighting strategies, circadian lighting)	✓	✓	✓
13.	Infection Prevention and Control	✓	✓	✓
14.	Material Sustainability, Toxicity	✓	✓	✓
15.	Biophilic Design (increases occupant connectivity to the natural environment)	✓		✓
16.	Behavioral Science and Environmental Psychology	✓		✓
17.	Culture, Function, Relevance			✓

INTERIOR DESIGN LEGISLATION INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

What do commercial interior designers do?

Commercial interior designers provide interior space analysis, planning and design, non-bearing interior construction drawings, furniture and finish specifications, and management of interior construction and alteration projects in public and private buildings. They work in compliance with applicable building design, construction and life-safety codes, regulations and guidelines to obtain non-bearing construction permits and are qualified by education, experience and examination to provide these services.

What is the purpose of Interior Design Legislation?

Interior Design Legislation protects public life-safety in the design of building interior environments, creates professional registration for interior designers & regulates the practice of interior design.

What does Interior Design Legislation do?

It allows interior designers qualified by education, experience, and examination to independently perform the regulated scope of “registered interior design.” It defines the professional practice of interior design, requires registered interior designers to meet national certification criteria of education, training and passing a rigorous 3-part national exam. It provides registered interior designers stamp & seal privileges when required for non-bearing construction permit drawings, thus taking responsibility for their own work.

What is the benefit to the public? Is there economic benefit?

It provides another measure of public safety protection and risk-mitigation for types requiring involvement of qualified design professionals building, expands consumer choice of qualified design professionals, increases professional employment opportunities, creates Alaska-hire incentive for professional interior design, attracts high-quality design talent to Alaska, encourages small business, and Alaska students studying “outside” to return home for professional career opportunities.

Do ALL interior designers need to be registered? Do architects need this registration?

No. Only interior designers who wish to practice within the regulated scope of interior design must either become registered in Alaska, or work under direct supervision of a registered interior designer or architect. Registered architects are exempt; interior designers of single-family to 4-plex (with height restrictions) residential structures are exempt.

Can anyone become a Registered Interior Designer?

No. Only persons who meet qualifications of interior design education and experience required by the Council for Interior Design Qualification (CIDQ) to sit for the 3-part national certification exam (NCIDQ Exam), and who pass the exam in full, may apply to the state for registration as commercial interior designers.

How will Interior Design Legislation be funded?

It is intended to be self-funded at low/no cost to the state through the existing Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors, within the same fee structure as the other design disciplines.

Do other states legally recognize interior design? Yes.

- 28 US states, Washington DC, Puerto Rico, and 7 Canadian provinces regulate interior design
- 27 US states, Washington DC, Puerto Rico, and 7 Canadian provinces require the NCIDQ Exam
- 14 US states, Washington DC, Puerto Rico, and 7 Canadian provinces have interior design stamp-sign and seal permitting privileges

Clarifications to questions concerning Interior Design Legislation

1. Do Interior Designers Have Adequate Health, Safety and Welfare Education, Training and Testing to protect the public? **YES.**

- The Council for Interior Design Accreditation sets the standard for interior design education, addressing relevant public HSW issues, ensuring college graduates understand their role protecting building occupants, applying laws, codes, standards and guidelines to solution development throughout the design process, and teaming with other design professionals.
- The National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) examination for professional interior design certification similarly addresses relevant public HSW issues. **Exam-ready candidates demonstrate application and/or understanding of federal, state/provincial, and local codes** including fire and life safety, barrier-free and accessibility (ADA) regulations & guidelines for interior spaces. It is a 3-part, 11-hour National Exam including a practicum.
- To qualify for the Exam, interior designers must complete rigorous college/university interior design-specific education and between 3,520 to 5,280 hours of supervised training.

2. Does Interior Design Legislation Improve Public Health, Safety & Welfare? **YES.**

- Interior designers often work directly with business or institutional clientele in public and private buildings providing interior space programming, design, function and fit-out, while effectively protecting the public through application of codes, standards, and regulations. This bill reasonably regulates those individuals and provides professional design and guidance when full architectural services are not required.

3. Does Interior Design Legislation Address a Public Threat/Gap in Services? Is there really a threat to public Health, Safety, Welfare? Can the decision to specify the wrong interior materials contribute to death? **YES.**

- The National Fire Protection Association states the selection of public assembly interior space content is a primary determinant of whether fire accidents become tragedies, second only to fire ignition source for public life/property impact.
- Per a 12/31/2020 Report from the Virginia Board for Professional and Occupational Regulation: "The unregulated practice of interior design presents at least a moderate risk of public harm. The involvement of other regulated design professionals or building codes and inspections may not be sufficient to mitigate potential hazards to public health, safety, and welfare."

4. Can't interior designers be satisfied with NCIDQ Certification as a national qualification standard? **NO.**

- NCIDQ is not an alternative to state regulation because the organization is not a sanctioning body. Additionally, NCIDQ Certification cannot grant any additional practice rights as it does not have state regulatory power.

5. Does the profession/occupation require such skill that the public generally is not qualified to select a competent practitioner without some assurance that they have met minimum qualifications? **YES.**

- The practice of interior design is specialized and requires practitioners to demonstrate competency in areas including fire, life-safety, building and energy codes; space planning and wayfinding; interior building materials, finishes, furnishings, and equipment; lighting and acoustics; accessibility standards, ergonomics and anthropometrics; and human environmental behavior.

6. Don't Architects Already Provide Interior Design Services? **NOT NECESSARILY.**

- Interior designers are experts in the field, with focused education, training and examination to specifically provide occupant-centric services, while architects generally have no specific interior design coursework within their education.
- Architecture firms often employ interior designers for interior, nonstructural work due to their expertise. Architecture firms that do not have in-house interior design have been required to contract with NCIDQ-certified interior designers to complete larger projects in Alaska for military and federal agencies, in compliance with the [Federal Unified Facility Criteria](#) and [Whole Building Design Guide](#).
- Much as nurse practitioners provide defined autonomous scopes of practice within the broader medical field, commercial interior designers with education, experience, and examination should be allowed to provide and take responsibility for their own regulated work.

7. Interior design is not a recognized design profession, is it? **YES, IT IS.**

- Interior Design is a recognized profession not only in 27 states/jurisdictions but also by the **U.S. Federal Government** per the [Unified Facility Criteria](#) (UFC), & [Whole Building Design Guide](#) (WBDG). Additionally, interior design has its own separate classification under the North American Industry Classification System (541410 – Interior Design Services). The NAICS System was developed for use by Federal Statistical Agencies for the collection, analysis and publication of statistical data related to the US Economy.

8. Is it possible to pass 2/3 of the NCIDQ exams with a 50% score, and 0 correct answers on building codes and safety? **NO.**

- It is not possible to pass ANY of the 3 parts (NCIDQ exam) with only half the questions answered correctly. An assessment of each question on the current exam indicates it would not be possible to miss all questions pertaining to "building codes and safety" woven throughout the exam, and pass it.

SUPPORT INTERIOR DESIGN LEGISLATION!