



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS
BUILDING AND SAFETY DIVISION
AB2533 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
(FAQS)**

Summary: This Document contains an overview of specific questions asked regarding the AB2533 program and how Los Angeles County Building and Safety Division may answer. Plan check, inspection, and project related questions are contained in the next sections of this document.

AB2533 General Project Questions

1. Question: What is the AB2533 Legalization Process designed for?

Answer: If your unpermitted ADU or JADU was constructed **before January 1, 2020**, your project qualifies for Legalization, as provided in state law, AB2533, which is codified at Government Code section 66332:

2. Question: Who is this program for?

Answer: This program is for residents and property owners who built ADU/JADUs without prior Planning and Building permits. Certain applicants meeting the requirements of this program may qualify for the following:

- Amnesty from violations of Planning Code standards
- Delay in enforcement action for ADUs/JADUs constructed without required permits such as fines, penalties, and orders to remove, modify, or alter- providing an opportunity to address code violations. of certain Building Code requirements to fix violations without penalties
- Legalization process of the previously unpermitted structure pursuant to Government Code section 66332 (AB2533).

3. Question: Will my application be required to have multiple agency approvals?

Answer: Yes, per LACRC Agency Approvals must be completed prior to permit issuance and approval. It should be noted delays may occur if appropriate agency approvals are not submitted concurrently/at the same time. The timeline or time for approval will be based upon the last/latest date of submittal to any or all agencies. Agency approvals may include but are not limited to: Fire, Regional Planning/Zoning, Public Health/Environmental Programs Division, Land Development/Geotechnical. An agency referral sheet will be provided to the applicant upon submission or by request



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4. **Question: Can I apply for Planning Code Amnesty?**

Answer: Applicants may be eligible for a waiver of existing violations of the Los Angeles County Planning Code, such as setbacks, height, size, lot coverage, location or any other planning or zoning requirements, that would preclude the preservation of an existing unpermitted ADU or Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) that was established and occupied **prior to January 1, 2020**. Information relating to the Regional Planning Policy and applications may be obtained at:

Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-6411
info@planning.lacounty.gov

5. **Question: What is Planning Code Amnesty?**

Answer: It is a waiver of any existing violation of the Los Angeles County Planning Code, such as setbacks, height, size, lot coverage, location or any other planning or zoning requirements, that would preclude the preservation of an existing unpermitted ADU or Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) that was established and occupied **prior to January 1, 2020**.

6. **Question: Will code enforcement fees continue?**

Answer: No, additional penalties associated with ADU/JADU will not be incurred if applicants are actively working to comply with resolving open code cases. Additionally, no new enforcement action or penalties will come from these inspections so as long as all open code cases are closed within the permitted construction and/or repair. Where multiple code violations exist, applicants must understand this program is limited to the violations associated with the unpermitted ADU/JADU.

7. **Question: What if I have an open code enforcement case because of my unpermitted ADU/JADU?**

Answer: This program is intended to offer a legal pathway for compliance and permitting unpermitted ADU/JADU projects built prior to January 1, 2020, to eliminate additional/existing code enforcement fines, liens by halting actions. Temporary halting occurs by the



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Owner/Owners Representative notifying the local Building and Safety Office Manager **IN WRITING** of the impending code enforcement case and the estimated time/date needed complete application for permitting and plan check submittal into the EPIC-LA System. Fee waivers should not include any previous fees paid for any enforcement actions. Leins and/or any other holds prior to application and/or violations for services rendered are not subject to refund or waiver.

8. Question: How do I show the year and date of my ADU/JADU construction?

Answer: Below are examples of Evidence that may be presented to show the ADU/JADU existed prior to January 1,2020. Date stamped documents must have the actual date of production prior to January 1, 2020.

- Notarized and/or Certified Copies of Property records
- Assessors' records
- Home Title Documents/Disclosures
- Insurance Inspection Records
- Building Permit Records
- Finance/Re-Finance Records
- Contractual Documents (supported by financial records)
- Microfiche Records
- Land Survey Records
- Date stamped Blueprint, Designs stamped by licensed designer
- Date-Stamped photos with notarized affidavit

9. Question: Will code enforcement fees continue?

Answer: No, additional penalties associated with ADU/JADU will not be incurred if applicants are actively working to comply with resolving open code cases. Additionally, no new enforcement action or penalties will come from these inspections so as long as all open code cases are closed within the permitted construction and/or repair. Where multiple code violations exist, applicants must understand this program is limited to the violations associated with the unpermitted ADU/JADU.



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10. Question: What if I have remodeled, modified or altered my ADU after January 1, 2020?

Answer: The original ADU may be permitted if the verification has been approved with condition of all applicable permits being issued as a single plan. Any change, alteration or modification of the ADU that requires permits under the LACBC will not qualify for the provisions of this program. All such changes, modifications, and/or alterations must be permitted separately and approved for the Final on the ADU structure that was built prior to January 1, 2020. Coordination for plans and permits for this type of project is more complex and will require additional permits. The final for the ADU will not be issued until all accompanying renovation/alteration permits are final.

11. Question: Is there any other accepted evidence that my ADU exists prior to January 1, 2020?

Answer: Yes, if the building materials such as wires, wood, sheathing, pipe have material manufacturer date stamps, and the owner exposes these items for inspection the building inspector may verify these materials for evidence at the pre-inspection to corroborate the year or date of construction. * Please note that multiple installed material manufacturer dates may be required as verification.

12. Question: What if I cannot provide any evidence of my ADU existing prior to January 1, 2020?

Answer: The burden of proof is solely the responsibility of the applicant. If the applicant cannot provide factual records of the date of construction prior to January 1, 2020, then the exemptions and protections of this policy do not apply. The ADU must be permitted pursuant to the current LACBC as a new ADU/JADU.

13. Question: Who will review the evidence and verify the date of construction?

Answer: Upon submittal for plan review, the assigned plan checker and local office manager will review the required documentation for verification and notify the applicant of acceptance or if any additional evidence is required. If the applicant cannot meet the burden of proof corrections will be issued to revise the plans to meet the current minimum LACBC.

14. Question: Do I need to meet the current codes for my ADU built prior to January 1, 2020?

Answer: No, the building may not need (is not required) to meet current codes if the building and its systems (electrical, mechanical, plumbing) were installed in a safe and compliant condition for the year and code in which it was installed and maintained in a safe and working condition.



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15. Question: Do I need to have a separate permit for an attached patio cover or carport?

Answer: Yes, this program is for habitable/living space only. Any attached or detached patio covers, porch, or car ports must be permitted separately. All such structures will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for the applicable LACBC requirements.

16. Question: Under what circumstances do I need to meet the current code requirements?

Answer: Any modified or altered system or building component that have been upgraded or changed after January 1, 2020, these systems or components shall be individually identified and permitted separately for compliance with the date of factual installation and/or the most recent LACBC.

17. Question: Do I need Fire Sprinklers in my ADU?

Answer: LACBC ADU/JADU Fire Sprinklers are required when the main home has been equipped with fire sprinklers. Certain areas of the County HOA's, Housing Tracts and Special Zoning requirements vary, the ADU/JADU must comply with existing requirements that were in place prior to January 1, 2020. If fire sprinklers were required and not installed, then a permit to add fire sprinklers will be issued to correct the deficiency.

18. Question: What if my ADU does not have a permanent furnace/heater installed?

Answer: A notice of correction will be issued. The ADU/JADU must have a permanent heat source for habitability. The new heater may require a mechanical permit with electric or gas/plumbing. These permits will be issued for the new heater and inspected to comply with current code requirements.

19. Question: What if my electrical panel is too small and does not have enough space to accommodate the appliances such as an air conditioner, water heater?

Answer: A notice of correction will be issued. An electrical permit must be obtained to upgrade the electrical panel to meet the minimum requirements for the ADU/JADU electrical loads and fixtures. These permits will be issued for the new heater and inspected to comply with current code requirements.

20. Question: What if I had a permit and did not complete work with inspection prior to January 1,2020?

Answer: The permitted work that was inspected will be honored if the owner presents proof of inspection or if inspection records are available. All remaining work, if different than plans,



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alterations or changes must be permitted to meet LACBC. Remodels, alterations and/or updated systems will be treated as all similar projects under the current LACBC and permitted alike.

AB2533 Plan Check and Submittal Questions

21. Question: Are Plans required and do I have to provide a full set of plans for my ADU/JADU?

Answer: Yes, plans must be submitted pursuant to the approved plan submittal requirements of the LACBC ADU/JADU Program. Although, this program allows for some limitations to location, setbacks and current codes to be forgiven, all plans must be submitted and approved for record. Plans must have accurate location, size, and code information for the permanent building and property records in its as built or repaired condition at the time of approval.

22. Question: Do I need a registered architect, engineer for my plan preparation and submission?

Answer: MULTIPLE PART There are specific instances when plans require licensed professionals.

- **Note:** It is highly **recommended but not required** that plans are prepared by a professional designer, contractor, and homeowner that has experience in residential building design and plan checking submittal process to expedite approvals to reduce mistakes, backchecks which can potentially reduce fees and timelines.
- **Answer: No**, a registered professional is not required if your ADU/JADU conforms to the LACBC minimum requirements and is built within basic code requirements in the current ADU/JADU program considering and recognizing the codes that applied during the year and date of construction prior to January 1, 2020.
- **Answer: Yes**, a licensed professional may be required, if your attached/detached ADU/JADU has specific design requirements and/or structural modifications that do not meet the basic LACBC. If the ADU/JADU is located at the top or bottom of a slope or is affected by a surcharge and/or elements of your ADU/JADU are not standard, then plans must be submitted pursuant to the approved plan submittal requirements of the LACBC ADU/JADU Program.

23. Question: Am I required to provide a full set of plans for my ADU/JADU?

Answer: Yes, plans must be submitted pursuant to the approved plan submittal requirements of the LACBC ADU/JADU Program.



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AB2533 Field Inspection Questions

1. Question: If I have a third-party Inspection, will this help me get approvals and permits?

Answer: Yes, a third-party inspection performed by a qualified person who is familiar with building systems can greatly enhance the owner's ability to determine the amount of potential work and cost associated with building systems in non-compliance as well as substandard and un-unsafe installations prior to building department submittal.

2. Question: Will the third-party inspection approve any of the work on my ADU?

Answer: No, third-party inspections will not approve work or replace the required inspections of the Los Angeles County Building Department Inspection Process, the approval of work must be performed by an Inspector of the Los Angeles County Building and Safety after valid permits are issued and an inspection request has been made by the owner/owner's agent.

3. Question: Will I have to open any walls or surface materials to allow inspectors to check the wiring, plumbing and other building systems?

Answer: Yes, the building inspection process processes it to verify and qualify the work in place to ensure it meets the minimum code standards for the time and date it was installed. This is intended to perform inspection through surface materials such as drywall, under carpet, within crawl space and attic spaces if available.

4. Question: Is there a limit to the inspection and how much surface material or areas of inspection can the inspector ask for?

Answer: Yes, typically the Inspector may ask for a small percentage 10 percent of areas to be open to view plumbing and electrical, if there are deficiencies and/or common unsafe practices for example wiring that is not installed correctly and/or plumbing pipes or wires that have been installed after January 1, 2020, the Inspector will issue a correction to apply for a building permit for the replacement and repair system to comply with current codes and standards under the LACBC. If there are deficiencies such as items of repair on a verified system that was installed prior to January 1, 2020, the inspector may ask for cooperation of the owner to open 50 percent of the areas before issuing a correction, if the areas with deficiencies are limited the inspector may not need to issue corrections to open 100 percent for repair and inspection.

Building System Qualification Pre-Inspection



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5. Question: What types of Inspections are part of a building pre-inspection and what do I need to be prepared for the building inspection?

Answer: A qualifying PRE-INSPECTION is required after the building plans and permit applications have been accepted to confirm the plans and application is accurate to the work in place. This inspection is to verify the building systems to qualify the applicants request for the AB2533 program to ensure the systems have not been altered or upgraded after January 1, 2020.

Pre-inspection will not be a comprehensive detailed inspection unless properly coordinated and permits have been fully obtained. The Pre-Inspection is intended to have a broad overview of the electrical, mechanical; plumbing, foundation; framing, roofing finishes; weather proofing, vent openings; attic access, windows; doors and other components related to the structure and the surrounding environment that may affect the ADU/JADU for the purpose of identifying the permits required and the basic scope of work. The surrounding environment may include but is not limited to location for Fire Rated walls, eaves and location of windows and escape routes and rescue/fire access. The owner can prepare for this inspection by having tools (Screwdriver) required to open electrical boxes, drywall knife or saw to potentially open areas of drywall, ladder that can be safely extended into attic and/or 3' above the roof eave. Shovel to pothole for verifying the depth of footings and/or plumbing connections underground.

Owner may have a notepad to take notes and a camera or cell phone to take photos for their record of deficiencies as the inspection takes place to coordinate future repairs or for coordination with contractors and Building and Safety personnel.

6. Question: What if the Pre-Inspection Inspector finds omissions or errors in conflict with my application and plans?

Answer: Minor Errors and omissions identified will be discussed on site and documented by the inspector. The notice of correction list and required changes to the application and plans may need to be revised and re-reviewed with additional Fees prior to proceeding. If it is determined that the ADU/JADU was NOT built prior to January 1, 2020, occupied or lived in the, AB2533 application may be denied, and the ADU/JADU will be required to be permitted under the current LACBC ADU/JADU program.

Electrical Inspection

7. Question: What will the Electrical inspector look for during his/her inspection?

Answer: The Building Inspector will be looking at all the electrical systems in and associated with the ADU/JADU including the point of connection at the main home, power pole etc. Any deficiencies or unsafe conditions identified that do not meet the code requirements on any portion



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of the system for the date of installation will be documented in a correction notice and the required corrections must be completed prior to the electrical final for the Certificate of Occupancy.

8. Question: Will I have to open walls, panels and fixtures for the electrical inspection?

Answer: Yes, the Building Inspector will have a minimum of 10 percent of your wires associated with plugs and fixtures exposed with a square opening 10x10 (ten inches square) on the stud side outlet and fixture boxes if there is no attic or crawl space to review the wires entering these areas. If there are no deficiencies in the inspection and the electrical wires and boxes are verified to have been installed prior to January 1, 2020, the inspector may issue corrections or sign off on this division of work as passed. If there are deficiencies, then the inspector will write corrections and/or ask to open more up-to 50 percent of the areas as described. If 50 percent of the areas are unsafe, then the system will likely need replacement to meet current codes and standards.

9. Question: What if the electrical panel (MP) is old?

Answer: Old electrical panels if maintained in a code compliant installation and have no unsafe conditions should Pass Inspection so if the Panel Meets the code for the year of installation. It should be noted that the panel must be properly sized to meet the load requirements and the overcurrent protection/breaker size to the wires and building circuits safely. If the panel requires minor corrections the inspector will issue corrections consistent with MP inspection requirements. If the panel is unsafe or cannot supply adequate power and/or has been modified/installed after January 1, 2020, then a Main Panel Upgrade Permit will be required for the replacement and/or repair to meet the pertinent code.

10. Question: Can I hire a C-10 Electrical Contractor to review the electrical systems in my ADU prior to the building department inspection?

Answer: Yes, this is highly recommended to consult with a licensed C-10 Electrical Contractor prior to submitting any building department applications. A Licensed Electrical C-10 Contractor is a specialist who is well informed on codes and regulations and may provide sound advice and provide the owner and/or the Building Department with a list of items that need to be completed in the permitting process. The electrical contractor in his/her inspection may open access areas with the homeowner that may be left open to provide the same access for the County Inspector to eliminate duplicate work.

11. Question: What are some common examples of unsafe wiring and electrical?

Answer: Typically, any electrical system, fixture and/or wiring installed that did not meet the code for the time and date it was installed and/or has been damaged would be considered unsafe and a life and safety risk.



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12. Question: I am not a contractor; my family and I built the ADU/JADU and did all the wiring without permits and inspections can we get the electrical passed?

Answer: Yes, If the system needs corrections and/or modifications a qualified homeowner can perform most if not all these tasks with the associated permits once issued. Los Angeles County has a comprehensive ADU/JADU program specifically created for homeowners to successfully understand the ADU/JADU construction process. Homeowners that have construction knowledge and skill regularly perform compliant installations that meet minimum code requirements. Los Angeles County Building and Safety "Step by Step How to Build an ADU" can be found on our Los Angeles County Public works, Building and Safety Division website.

13. Question: Is Ground Fault Circuit Interrupt (GFCI) required and if so, where do I need the devices?

Answer: Yes, GFCI is an essential life Safety Device required on new and existing systems in specific locations per code for personal protection.

- ✓ Bathrooms – all receptacles.
- ✓ Garages – If it's a garage receptacle, it requires GFCI protection.
- ✓ Outdoors – all exterior receptacles.
- ✓ Basements – finished and unfinished.
- ✓ Crawl spaces – at or below grade.
- ✓ Kitchens – Every receptacle installed in a kitchen—regardless of its location or what it serves—now requires GFCI protection.
- ✓ Laundry areas – washers, dryers, and all receptacles.
- ✓ Within 6 feet of sinks – measured along the cord path.
- ✓ Boathouses.
- ✓ Bathtubs and shower stalls – receptacles within 6 feet.
- ✓ Utility rooms, damp locations, and wet locations.

14. Question: Do I have to have tamper resistive (TR) electrical receptacles?

Answer: Yes, all receptacles must be (TR) as a matter of life and safety Tamper Resistive Receptacles have been standard protection in all habitable spaces.

Mechanical Inspection

15. Question: What will the mechanical be looking for during his/her inspection?

Answer: The Building Inspector will be looking at mechanical systems and devices such as heating and cooling equipment, water heating systems, ventilation for bathrooms, cooking and other gas and electric appliances that require mechanical ventilation. Additionally, mechanical



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inspection will include the location of equipment, equipment mounting/installation and the location and types of vents and exhaust for compliance with the Code for the date of installation.

16. Question: What will be required if I have gas/fuel pipes?

Answer: Gas/fuel pipes/piping will be inspected for the type of material, location and installation from the point of service to the location of each gas outlet. Underground gas pipe shall be installed and properly listed for its exposure. All gas piping must be protected from physical damage and secured per the LACBC with the appropriate shutoff valves to prevent leaking. The Inspector will require a gas pressure test on all gas or fuel piping prior to final and issuance of Certificate of Occupancy. The gas company who serves/provides gas to the address may have other standards and legal requirements relating to the connections that should be researched by owners.

17. Question: Do I have to have Carbon Monoxide detectors if I don't have any gas appliances?

Answer: Yes, this is a mandatory life safety device in all living spaces, both smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are required to be installed and meet the current code requirements at all times of any construction, modification and or certificate of occupancy inspection. In some cases, if built prior to 1988 and not altered Carbon Monoxide detectors may be accepted as battery operated with a 10-year non-removable battery. Occupancies built after 1988 require the Carbon and Smoke detectors to be both hardwired and interconnected with a backup battery.

18. Question: Do I have to have a bathroom fan?

Answer: Yes, based on the date of construction or modification if the bathroom contains and shower, tub or spa type feature. If the ADU/JADU was constructed prior to 2006 and the bathroom was not modified an exhaust fan may not be required if the bathroom has a window that opens to the exterior in an approved location.

19. Question: Do I have to have kitchen ventilation/fan?

Answer: Yes, based on the date of construction or modification. If the ADU/JADU was constructed prior to 2008 and the kitchen exhaust fan vented to the exterior may not be required. If the ADU was constructed or has been modified after 2008 the LACBC will require a kitchen exhaust fan vented to the exterior to be installed.

20. Question: Are there any requirements for the exhaust vents to be placed?

Answer: Yes, exhaust vents must be located no closer than 3 (three) feet in any direction from any window, door or any intake and air/attic ventilation opening.



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21. Question: Do I need to have attic vents?

****NOTE: Updating existing attic vents, intake vents or vent openings at any time prior and during this program FOR FIRE LIFE SAFETY will not change the outcome or status of the permits and/or final of an ADU/JADU if compliant upgrades have been made to these openings and systems with any and all approved material and devices.***

Answer: Yes and No, Attic ventilation is required in many circumstances and may be required based on construction; Types of attic ventilation and the protection of the property will vary and there are many alternate devices and/or methods to achieve the appropriate venting safely. Attic vents and attic intake vents have been the subject of major changes, innovation and modifications based on the location of the ADU/JADU due to fire severity and the date of installation. It is highly recommended to research the available options and discuss these options with the designer, contractor and Building Inspector.

Plumbing Inspection

22. Question: What will the plumbing inspector be looking for during his/her inspection?

Answer: The Building Inspector will be looking at plumbing systems, fixtures, materials, devices connections. Some of the items related to this inspection will include sewer and drain connections, pipe type and size, functionality of the system, hot water supply and appliance, drain/sewer cleanouts, P-Traps in sinks, bathtubs, shower drains and laundry standpipes and verify plumbing vents within trap arm distance and location of vent terminations.

23. Question: How will the inspector inspect my sewer and drains?

Answer: Sewer connection and Drain inspections are more complex to identify the location, depth, size and flow of these systems. P-traps for shower, tubs and sinks may be able to be inspected with light and visual although a professional camera inspection by a plumbing company may be required to verify flow and connections. Almost all plumbing camera systems have locator devices on them in the event a sewer connection needs to be exposed, and line location needs verification for uncovering accurately.

24. Question: How will the inspector be able to inspect my pipes and verify the materials and why?

Answer: The inspector may be able to see some plumbing materials under the home or in the attic if available. Additionally, just as the electrical inspection, holes may be required in drywall near fixtures and valves to verify the protection of the pipes and the types of connections. Some materials and products that convey waste and water may not be approved materials for habitable space as some materials are designed specifically for sewer yard piping, gardening and landscape and may not be used for waste or potable water.



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25. **Question: Do I have to have low water fixtures?**

Answer: No, existing fixtures that were installed and comply with the code at the date of installation that are functional and provide safe operation will be accepted. In the event of a replacement or remodel after January 1, 2020, the new system and fixtures will be required to meet the current LACBC.

26. **Question: Does my incoming waterline require inspection?**

Answer: Yes, the incoming water supply line will be inspected at the point of connection and the point of service. If the pipe is Copper or other approved metallic pipe the line will be inspected for electrical bonding as well as a bond to the gas pipe. The incoming water supply may need pothole inspection over the length in certain locations to verify its depth and protection of the pipe if required. Incoming water lines and interior pipes must be protected from backflow/back-siphon contamination, physical damage and freezing in some locations. Back-siphon protection can be made at required locations by adding a vacuum breaker or anti-siphon valve (i.e. hose bibbs and lawn sprinkler supply).

27. **Question: Do I need to complete a backwater valve or just fill out the Backwater valve form as a part of this inspection?**

Answer: Yes, the Backwater valve form is required as a part of the safety and sanitary requirements regardless of the date of approval. The backwater valve is needed when the upstream manhole of the County/City sewer is above the floor level of the plumbing fixtures. The reason this is very important for field verification is because there are several locations throughout the county where the shared building sewer line of an ADU/JADU may connect into the building sewer of the primary home that potentially is above or below the main residence and is susceptible to sewage backup into the ADU/JADU or main home.

28. **Question: What if my ADU was built over the house sewer line?**

Answer: An ADU cannot be built over a sewer line, this is a significant risk for the home in addition to the municipality. An ADU built over a private sewer can be evaluated by the Local Building inspector and the Building and Safety manager for review although, in no way the line can be made of Clay. Clay sewer pipes must be properly replaced with approved material or re-routed. The owner and/or contractor are required to request approval of the system and methods prior to performing any pipe replacement or relocation from the Building and Safety Department.



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29. **Question: Do all my water pipes need to be insulated?**

Answer: No not all pipes require insulation, pipes that were installed prior to January 1 ,2020 that meet the code are accepted without insulation. All pipe installation must comply with the date it was installed, if the pipes have been replaced without permits after January 1, 2020, insulation will be required. Most potable waterpipe can be verified by the manufacturer's codes and date stamps.

Documents Required for this Program Include the following Documents

*(*indicates same document)*

1. ***AB2533 "Handout"** - Permit steps: Program Handout for Guidelines and Steps to Permitting
2. ***AB2533 "Handout" Affidavits:** Required Documents in Program handout "REQUIRED"
3. ***AB2533 Inspection Checklist:** Pre-Inspections/Third Party Checklists: "REQUIRED".