City of Bellingham
Classification Specification - Civil Service

CLASS TITLE	**Plans Examiner/Senior Plans Examiner**
DEPARTMENT	**Planning and Community Development - Building Services**
UNION:	**1937**
SG:	**115/116**
CS:	**Y**
FLSA:	**Y**
EEO/SOC CODE:	**TE/19-3051**

JOB SUMMARY:

Performs technical work and provides oversight in building code compliance activities including plan review, permit issuance, inspection and enforcement. Reviews building plans for compliance and conformance with Local, State and Federal codes and regulations governing the construction and alteration of commercial and residential structures.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS:

Reports to the Building Official. Works independently under general supervision. May provide technical instruction and assistance as well as prioritize and review work of lower classified staff, as assigned.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

Plans Examiner

This is the first level in the Building Plans Examiner series. Incumbents are expected to perform progressively responsible review of routine to moderately complex projects. A person hired into this position will receive training and direction as they gain knowledge of applicable codes, ordinances, regulations and departmental policies, procedures and precedents required to independently perform the full range of job duties. An incumbent at this level typically receives instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise.

An individual in this position will move to the Senior Plans Examiner level in a non-competitive promotion upon completing three years as a Plans Examiner at the City of Bellingham and obtaining International Code Council (ICC) Residential and Building Plans Examiner certifications.

Senior Plans Examiner

The Senior Plans Examiner is distinguished from the Plans Examiner by the greater level of technical knowledge, skill, experience and independence in performing job duties. Incumbents at this level have comprehensive knowledge of applicable codes, ordinances, regulations and departmental policies, procedures and precedents required to independently perform the full range of routine to the most complex plan review and permit issuance for residential, commercial and industrial projects.

Note: A person with the requisite experience, training and certifications may be hired in at the Senior Plans Examiner level.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

1. Reviews and examines construction plans, calculations and technical specifications to assure compliance with relevant state and local building codes, ordinances, and regulations. Interprets associated codes and clarifies technical requirements. Prepares technical reports, comments, letters, and other communication.

2. Develops policy recommendations relating to Building Services plan review function.

3. Coordinates with and provides technical information to City staff and maintains close communication with the builders, developers, and architects.

4. Keeps abreast of industry advances in materials, techniques and methodology.

5. Collects evidence of required approvals from other departments or agencies. Authorizes, when appropriate, the issuance of permits. Drafts conditions as necessary to accomplish compliance. Computes applicable fees.

6. Attends various project coordination, pre-application, pre-construction and preliminary occupancy meetings; coordinates plan check activities with Building Inspectors, other City departments, contractors and outside agencies.

7. Prompts code compliance by advising and educating engineers, architects, developers, contractors and general public about acceptable practices.

8. Investigates complaints and alleged code violations.

9. Receives and responds to inquiries pertaining to codes and regulations.

Senior Plans Examiner

1. Assists in planning, prioritizing and evaluating the work and activities of the Building Services plan review function. Develops, recommends and assists in implementing policy and work process improvements.

2. Provides training and technical direction to lower classified staff assigned to residential, commercial, and industrial building plan review activities to ensure work is completed accurately and communicated effectively. Participates in evaluating performance. Acts as lead worker in organizing work, prioritizing tasks, and providing direction and oversight, as assigned.

3. Reviews and examines construction plans, calculations and technical specifications for the most technical and complex projects.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. Performs field inspections of construction projects and assists inspectors and other staff in code interpretation as needed.

2. Performs other related duties of a similar nature and level as needed.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Knowledge:
- A working knowledge of the Building Code and related state and local codes, ordinances, and regulations sufficient to recall, interpret and apply same.
- Knowledge of construction methods and materials, and principles of engineering, architecture, and survey work.

Skills:
- Interpersonal sensitivity and stress tolerance for negotiating and resolving conflicts equitably within the scope of delegated authority.
- Good oral and written communication skills.

Abilities:
- Ability to utilize computerized information systems.
- Ability to understand and apply City and departmental policies and procedures.
- Ability to maintain positive and effective working relationships with other governmental entities, private interests, contractors and professional clientele.
- Ability to read and interpret plans and specifications, and to compare them to construction in progress.
- Ability to detect violations and hazards of fire and collapse.
- Ability to develop appropriate remedies to accomplish intent of codes and regulations.
- Ability to provide clear explanations on procedures and regulations, verbally and in writing, to the public and related personnel in a professional manner.
- Ability to interpret and enforce regulations with firmness, tact, impartiality, and cooperation.
- Ability to work independently, and to organize and prioritize tasks under general supervision.
- Ability to recognize potential risks to the City.
- Ability to comprehend many diverse concerns and to exercise good judgment to accomplish equitable code compliance.
- Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- Ability and willingness to demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation and Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Physical ability to perform the essential functions of the job, including:
    - Frequently operate a computer and read a computer screen or typewritten page.
    - Frequently communicate verbally.
    - Lift and carry objects weighing up to 40 pounds.
    - Mobility necessary to occasionally move about construction sites and sit, stand or bend in awkward positions

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Work is primarily performed in an office environment in a frequently stressful atmosphere. Office work is performed at the public counter or in an office setting, using computers, phones and other office equipment. Occasional field work is performed at construction sites in various states of completion. Construction projects may require climbing ladders, construction stairs, scaffolding and steep sites. Sites may be wet and slippery. All weather conditions should be expected.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

Plans Examiner

- Graduation from an accredited high school or equivalency (GED).
- Five years of progressively responsible experience in building construction, inspection, plan review, permit processing, building design and/or building code enforcement.

  An associate's degree in architecture, engineering, construction management, building technology or related field may substitute for two years of required work experience.

  An accredited bachelor's degree in architecture from a university recognized by the National Architectural Accrediting Board and a Washington architect license may substitute for four years of required work experience.

- Must secure and maintain International Code Council (ICC) Residential (R3) and Building (B3) Plans Examiner certification within 12 months of hire or promotion to Plans Examiner.
- One year of experience as a Building Inspector or Plans Examiner with a municipality preferred.

Senior Plans Examiner

- Graduation from an accredited high school or equivalency (GED).
- Three years of experience as a Plans Examiner with the City of Bellingham or equivalent experience with another local governmental jurisdiction.
- International Code Council (ICC) Residential (R3) and Building (B3) Plans Examiner certification required.
- Must secure and maintain International Code Council (ICC) Mechanical (M3) and Plumbing (P3) Plans Examiner Certification, within 12 months of hire or promotion to Senior Plans Examiner.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Valid Washington State driver's license at time of hire and good driving record. Candidates must submit a three-year driving abstract prior to hire.
- Employment contingent upon passing a criminal background check and child and adult abuse records check.

- Failure to secure and maintain required certifications within established time limits will result in demotion to the lower classification for which qualified until such time as the required certification is achieved or dismissal if demotion is not applicable.

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5/13/85

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COMMISSION ADOPTION: December 14, 2022