



Residential Garage Conversions

This information bulletin describes the minimum requirements for obtaining a permit to convert a garage of a single family dwelling unit or duplex to habitable (or non-parking) space. It also outlines potential problems typically associated with such a conversion, allowing an applicant to evaluate the feasibility of a proposed garage conversion. This bulletin does not pertain to the temporary conversion of a garage for a real estate sales office in a new subdivision.

For clarification regarding the permit process or information contained in this bulletin, visit the Development Services Center, 200 Civic Center Drive, Vista, California 92084, or phone (760) 639-6100.

1. Overview of Garage Conversion Considerations

The following is a list of potential problems typically associated with garage conversions.

A. Replacement Parking

A two-car garage must be maintained on properties developed with single-family homes as required by Section 18.54.050 of the Vista Development Code. If the proposed garage conversion would leave the subject property deficient of this requirement, a replacement garage must be provided. The replacement garage may be attached or detached, and the minimum interior dimensions shall be 18' wide by 19' deep. Attached garages must meet the setbacks required by the zoning of the subject property. Detached garages may encroach into the side or rear setback, but must maintain a minimum five-foot setback; front yard setbacks required by the subject property's zoning must be maintained.

B. Driveways

An existing driveway will be required to be closed if it no longer leads to legal off-street parking. New driveways may also be required when replacement parking is provided elsewhere on the lot. Any work in the public right-of-way requires a permit and must be constructed per San Diego Regional Standards Drawings.

C. Guesthouse Considerations

Any converted garage that would not provide direct interior access into the existing residence is considered by the City to be a guesthouse. In certain zones, a guesthouse requires approval through the Planning Division. Please contact the Planning Division at (760) 639-6100 with any questions regarding guesthouse requirements.

D. Sleeping Rooms

For safety reasons, gas fired water heaters or furnaces are not allowed to be in rooms used for sleeping purposes. If the converted garage is to be used for sleeping purposes, the water heater and/or furnace may need to be relocated or enclosed.

E. Other Applicable Codes

All applicable provisions of the California Building Code, California Mechanical Code, California Plumbing Code, National Electrical Code, and Title 24 California Energy Efficiency Standards must be met when converting garages into living space.

2. Plan Specifications

Plans must be drawn to scale and must be of sufficient clarity to indicate the location, nature and extent of the work proposed. Be sure to clearly label all existing and all proposed construction. Three sets of plans are required. Plans must show, in detail that the proposed work will conform to the provisions of the California Building Code, City of Vista Municipal Code, and all other relevant laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. Many of the California Building Code requirements are summarized in the “Minimum Construction Specifications.”

3. Forms

A. General Application

Application is done at time of submittal by the development services staff. Please allow up to ten (10) working days for first plan check review.

B. Title 24 Compliance Forms

A Certificate of Compliance (CF-1R) form and a Mandatory Measures Checklist (MF-1R) must be submitted to demonstrate compliance with California State Energy Efficiency Standards for garages converted to habitable space.

4. Drawings

Following are guidelines for minimum drawings to include in the plans for a typical garage conversion.

A. Site Plan and Vicinity Map

This drawing shows the general layout of the lot and must include the following information:

1. Property lines and dimensions.
2. The existing building footprint including dimensions and distances to adjacent property lines. Include items such as eave overhangs, bay windows and fireplaces.
3. The proposed construction, noting the dimension of the exterior walls and the distances to adjacent property lines.
4. Any accessory structures and dimensions and the distances from these structures to adjacent property lines and to adjoining structures.
5. Access to an off-street parking area with the parking area dimensioned.

B. Floor plan

For the garage conversion, show proposed rooms and all adjoining rooms. Include the following information:

1. Use and dimensions of rooms.
2. Size and type of windows, sill height and doors.
3. Size of headers above new wall openings.
4. Location of plumbing fixtures.
5. Location and energy output (BTUs) of heating equipment.
6. Location and type of any new vent fans.
7. Location of smoke alarms.

C. Foundation Plan

For slab floor construction, this drawing must show:

1. Size, depth and location of new footings (for new wall where garage door is being removed, see Figure 1).
2. Thickness of concrete slab.
3. Any new concrete work of floor framing associated with the conversion. If constructing a raised wood floor on wood sleepers over the existing concrete slab, all wood must be treated, including the subfloor.

D. Elevation Views

This is a drawing of each new exterior wall from the outside of the building. Include the following:

1. Doors, windows and other openings.
2. Exterior finishes for the walls and roof.
3. Wall bracing or shear panel locations or other means of obtaining the required lateral bracing.

E. Connection Details

Sufficient details must be shown to clearly explain the method of construction and means of connections for any new walls.

F. Electrical/Plumbing Plans

Electrical and plumbing plans are required just to show the fixture locations on the floor plan and are checked by the Building Inspector.

G. Roof Framing Plan

If you are modifying existing framing in the roof area (for example, to provide ceiling joists where the garage roof framing presently is comprised of rafter and rafter ties only), a roof framing plan must be provided. Include the following information:

1. When modifying rafters, please indicate hips, valleys and ridges for both new and existing construction. Dimensions of both new and existing roofs.
2. Rafter and ceiling joist size and spacing.
3. Any special framing at the roof area.

Any proposed framing not meeting conventional construction standards may require submittal of plans and calculations by a registered design professional licensed in the State of California.

5. Title 24 Energy Documentation

All single-dwelling or duplex additions or alterations are required to comply with California Energy Efficiency Standards for Low-Rise Residential Buildings contained in the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 1. A number of compliance methods are described in a Residential Manual available from the California Energy Commission, phone 1-800-772-3300.

Table 1 – Title 24 Energy Requirements
(Climate Zone 7)

Floor Area	<101 sq. ft.	<1000 sq. ft.
Insulation:		
Ceiling	R-19	R-30
Wall	R-13	R-13
Floor	R-13	R-19
Glass:		
Type	Dual Pane	Dual Pane
Sq. Ft.	Max. 50*	20% of FA*

*The area of any glass removed, as a direct result of the room addition, may be added to the 20%.

Minimum acceptable requirements for the simplest method of meeting the requirements are shown in the table above. You may complete the required Certificate of Compliance Form (CF-1R) using the information shown in this table. You must also show the required insulation values and dual pane windows on your plans. Also complete a Mandatory Measures Checklist (MF-1R) by checking all the items that apply to your project. The CF-1R form and the Mandatory Measures Checklist are available at the Development Services Center.

6. The Plan Review Process

Every effort will be made to approve the plans for the project during the first plan review. Please bring with you three (3) full sets of plans, two sets of structural calculations, two (2) sets of truss calculations (if applicable) and two (2) copies of energy compliance information. Allow up to ten (10) working days for first plan check review and five (5) working days for review on plan check re-submittals.

7. Fees

Plan check fees must be paid at the time of initial plan review. The remaining Building permit fees must be paid when the permit is issued.

If your garage conversion is 500 square feet or more in area, school fees will be due. Projects under 500 square feet in area are exempt. If you are in the Vista Unified School District, you may pay fees at their office located at 1222 Arcadia Ave., you may also contact them for questions and fee estimates at (760) 726-2170, ext. 2893 or 2802. You must obtain a school letter through the Development Services Center after the first plan check review has been completed and take that form to the school district for signature and payment. This must be done prior to building permit issuance.

8. When the Permit is Issued

You will receive an inspection record card at permit issuance. The inspector signs this card as the construction is inspected and approved. If the project includes electrical work, an electric circuit card will also be provided at permit issuance time. This card must be completed for the inspector prior to calling for electrical inspection.

At permit issuance, a stamped, approved set of plans will be returned to you. This set must be available for the building field inspector. Your construction will be expected to conform to the approved plans. All unapproved work will be required to be exposed for test (when necessary) and reviewed for compliance.

If it is necessary to change the plans during construction, changes must be approved at the Development Services Center.

The permit is active for 180 days after the date of issuance. Scheduling and inspection will extend the permit for -180 days from the date the inspection passes. For additional information on permit expiration and extensions, you may contact the Development Services Center at (760) 639-6108.

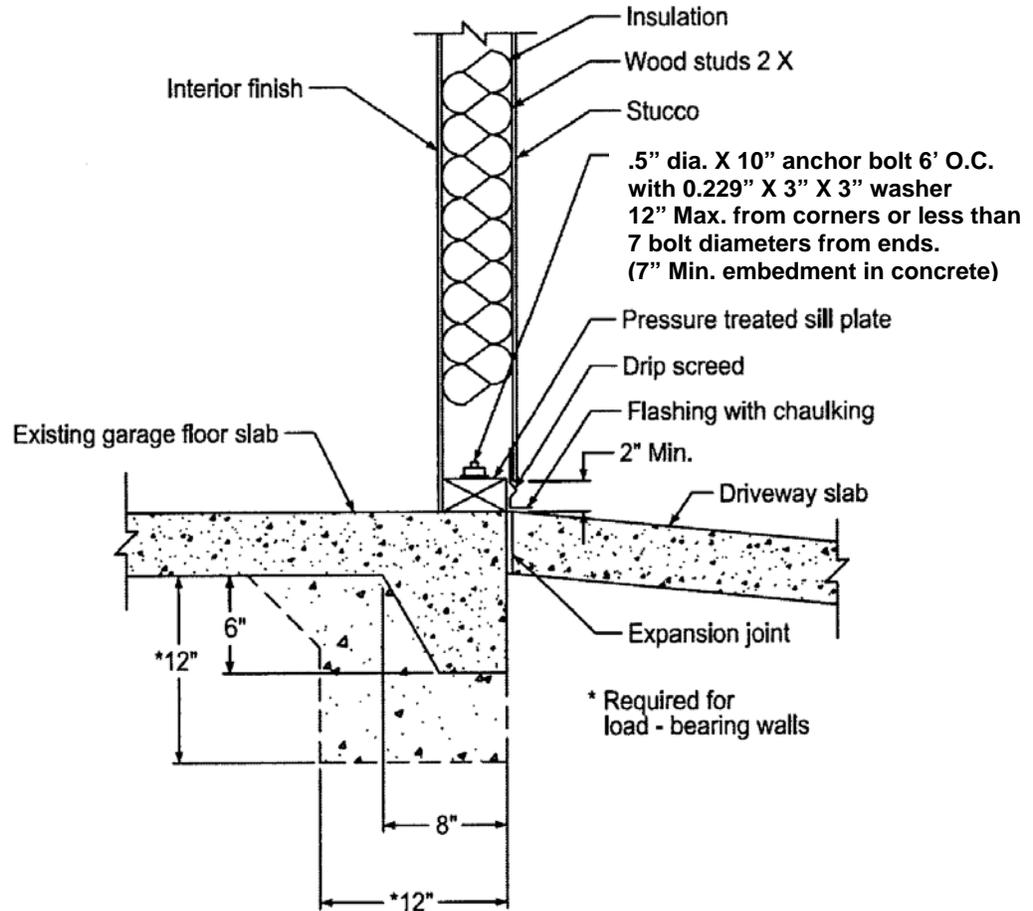
9. Scheduling an Inspection

You may schedule inspections by calling the City's automated inspection line at (760) 639-6106. You must schedule inspections one **work** day in advance by 3:30 p.m. You may request a morning or afternoon inspection, if desired. For inspector's estimated time of arrival, please call the building division's direct number, (760) 639-6105, the

morning of the inspection between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. Please note that the City is closed every other Friday.

Figure 1 / Typical Garage Section Detail

Detail A / Stucco Finish Detail



Detail B / Wood Siding Detail

