

OPA is Frequently Referenced

Though not Required in California

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The state of California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) developed the Office for Pre-Approval of Anchorage (OPA) for seismic product preapproval. OPA is the current OSHPD nomenclature which will change in the future. When implementation of the 2013 *California Building Code (CBC)* becomes effective in 2014, this preapproval will be known as OPM going forward.

Contrary to popular opinion, a manufacturer's OPA is not required because it is voluntary. Sway brace product listed/approved for use per NFPA 13 and the *CBC* is acceptable to OSHPD with or without an OPA.

OSHPD created OPA to expedite the review process of sway brace products and their installation in California hospital construction. The project Structural Engineer of Record (SEOR) is responsible for the building structure interface with the seismic point loads of the system sway bracing. Since an OPA cannot substitute for his purview, it can be argued that the OPA does not expedite this process.

The 2010 *CBC* references NFPA 13 with few exceptions. Examples are:

***CBC* Page 116, 1613A.6.3 Automatic Sprinkler Systems**

"Automatic sprinkler systems designed and installed in accordance with NFPA 13 shall be deemed to meet the requirements of Section 13.6.8 of ASCE 7."

"Exception: The allowable values for design of anchors, hangers and bracings shall be determined in accordance with material chapters of this code in lieu of those in NFPA 13."

***CBC* Page 124, 13.6.8 Piping Systems**

"Fire protection sprinkler piping shall satisfy the requirements of Section 13.6.8.2."

13.6.8.2 Fire Protection Sprinkler Piping Systems

"Fire Protection sprinkler piping, pipe hangers, and bracing designed and constructed in accordance with NFPA 13 shall be deemed to meet the force and displacement requirements of this section. The exceptions of Section 13.6.8.3 shall not apply."

In summary an OPA is not required by OSHPD or the DSA in California. Anyone advising to the contrary is being disingenuous.



Kraig Kirschner is a third generation fire sprinkler contractor and a journeyman fitter. He is a Principal Member of NFPA 13 - Hanging and Bracing Technical Committee and serves on Standard Technical Panels of UL 203, UL 203A and FM 1950. Kraig is a Life Member of the National Fire Protection Association and was named Person of the Year in 2009 Fire Protection Contractor Magazine. He holds dozens of patents that enhance the installation and application of hangers and sway braces.