

New Laws Urge California Condo Owners to Act on Balcony and Deck Inspections

New law requires condominium balcony & deck inspections under SB 326 by Jan 1, 2026, with stricter SB 410 rules ahead. Southern California is in poor compliance

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, October 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While the California legislature is poised to deliver a new law for condominiums in 2026, as of January 1, 2025, most California condominium associations have not yet completed their inspections of decks, balconies, and other elevated elements under SB 326. Experts estimate that more than 20% of these associations missed the deadline. Even more concerning, only a fraction of Southern California's 235 incorporated cities and ten counties provide guidance on their official websites - despite an estimated 8 to 12 million residents living in wood-frame multifamily structures covered by the law.



Condominium Owners in Southern California need to Comply with SB 326 Inspections

"SB 326 applies specifically to California condominium projects with three or more attached units and requires inspections of exterior elevated elements - such as decks, balconies, and walkways - by a licensed structural or civil engineer or architect," said Laurie S. Poole, Co-Managing Partner at Adams-Stirling, PLC. Under Civil Code §5551, these first inspections were due by January 1, 2025.

Passed after the tragic 2015 Berkeley balcony collapse that killed six people, SB 326 mandates ongoing structural inspections of wood-based elevated elements in HOA-managed properties. "Many community associations are still unaware that the deadline has passed," said James Malki, owner of SouthCoastDeckInspections.com. "We get calls daily from managers who missed the inspection date. Thankfully, our team collaborates closely with allied architects and engineers to streamline the compliance process". Since 2023, James' firm has inspected hundreds of condominium and multifamily properties, uncovering widespread wood rot, moisture damage, and UV degradation -issues that could have led to catastrophic failure if left unchecked.



Many community associations are still unaware that the deadline has passed. Thankfully, our team collaborates closely with allied architects and engineers to streamline the compliance process.”

*James Malki, COO South Coast
Deck Inspections*

Still, a new law, [SB 410](#), becomes effective January 1, 2026, and expands upon SB 326. Poole explained that the amendment requires “specific data to be included on the first page of the inspection report - such as the number of units, elevated elements, and any components identified as posing immediate safety risks.” Inspectors must also certify that they evaluated a statistically significant sample. Sellers must now provide buyers with the most recent report, and associations must make them available to members - enhancing transparency, accountability, and resident safety.

For those who missed the original deadline, the message is clear: act now. “Consumer protection is the Department of Real Estate’s top priority,” said Chika Sunquist, DRE Commissioner. “We encourage all licensees managing affected properties to partner with the appropriate licensed professionals now to ensure safety and compliance.”

Thousands of properties across Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, San Bernardino, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Imperial, and Kern Counties fall under these rules. State and industry experts urge all HOA boards and property managers to complete their balcony and deck inspections as soon as possible - ensuring compliance and protecting residents’ safety.

Only condominiums with wood-framed decks, balconies, stairs, or walkways more than six feet above ground are subject to the law. “Every balcony, walkway, and deck is more than a structural element—they’re extensions of our homes and communities,” said Pete Volbeda, architect and partner of South Coast Deck Inspections. “With the new rules approaching in 2026, boards that missed the deadline need to act now. The purpose of SB 326 is to protect lives.”

How to Prepare?

California officials and inspection professionals alike urge all community properties to complete their required balcony and deck inspections as soon as possible, ensuring both compliance with state law and the continued safety of residents. Condominium property managers can visit CaliforniaDeckInspections.org for free SB 326 inspection referrals and more information.

AUTHOR:

Joseph Bernard, CEO
The Power Point, LLC
joseph@thepowerpoint.us
8282165769
thepowerpoint.us

INTERVIEWEES:

Laurie S. Poole, Esq., CCAL | Co-Managing Partner

Adam-Stirling | Davis-Stirling

lpoole@adamsstirling.com

(760) 620-0747

591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 920

San Diego, CA 92108

<http://davis-stirling.com/>

Pete Volbeta, Architect C 13077

petearchit@gmail.com

(909) 519-8670

164 N 2nd Ave

Upland, CA 91786

<https://www.petevolbeda.com/>

Chika Sunquist, Commissioner

% Christina Jimenez Assistant Commissioner, Communications and Publications

California Department of Real Estate

christina.jimenez@dre.ca.gov

(916) 891-7308

651 Bannon Street

Sacramento, CA 95811

www.dre.ca.gov

James Malki, COO

Malki Construction dba South Coast Deck Inspections CSLB #1118042

james@southcoastdeck.com

(657) 707-9127

1576 N. Batavia St, Ste 2

Orange, CA 92867

www.southcoastdeckinspections.com

Joseph Bernard

The Power Point LLC

+1 828-216-5769

joseph@thepowerpoint.us

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/860187810>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire,

Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.