

Aesthetics & Screening



Limited Review: Health & Safety

If an Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) determines that an application does not satisfy their checklist, the city or county must issue one complete written correction notice detailing all deficiencies and any additional information needed to be eligible for expedited permit issuance. AHJs should not provide a second round of unrelated comments—unless related to a health and safety issue—which can add preventable expenses and time to a project.

[Assembly Bill 1236 \(Chiu, 2015\)](#) establishes that local ordinances cannot create unreasonable barriers to electric vehicle station installation, including subjecting applications to aesthetic review or other processes that unnecessarily extend timelines or create barriers to cost-effectiveness. This helps avoid long timelines. AB 1236 gives clear instructions “to encourage the installation of electric vehicle charging stations,” and a growing number of AHJs are responding with constructive policies and procedures.

Some AHJs have subjected projects to aesthetic review and the permit applicant to make design changes to the permit application or risk denial. While design guidelines that implicate health and safety, such as safety related lighting, clearance, and signage are permissible under AB 1236, aesthetic changes that do not have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health and safety — such as landscaping and other screening requirements—are not in accordance with state permitting requirements under AB 1236.

Health and safety concerns can lead to the need for project revisions when the building official believes that added EV charging loads may affect existing electrical infrastructure or when the project might create a visual hazard. A visual hazard is different than a visual impairment. Visual hazard may compromise fire safety, while a visual impairment can be mitigated to not adversely impact safety. The fact that the EV charging station or its equipment is visible from the street or other right of way is not a visual impairment and no mitigation (i.e., screening) should be required.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station Permit Streamlining

Design Standards

Localities must ministerially approve EV charging permit applications regardless of siting location and local zoning regulations, and regardless of the type or size of the proposed installation. ([AG Legal Alert—Electric Vehicle Charging Station Permit Streamlining Requirements](#))

Please review the [Electric Vehicle Charging Station Permitting Guidebook](#), which this guide is modeled after, for more comprehensive information.



[Learn more about Zero-Emission Vehicles.](#)

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