



City of Santa Cruz Bird-Safe Building Design Standards

When do the standards apply?

Bird-safe building design standards apply in all districts where new construction or exterior changes to the façade of buildings or structures requiring a Planning Permit and are located adjacent to or within 300 feet of a General Plan land use designation of CR, PR, NA, or AG; an open waterway mapped in the City-wide Creeks and Wetlands Management Plan; or any area within 300 feet of undeveloped property likely to provide significant bird habitat, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

Which architectural features require glazing treatment?

Treatment is required for 90 percent of all glazing within 40 feet above grade, for portions of the buildings where glazing would have the potential to reflect vegetation or open water.

Glazing treatment standards

Glazing treatment shall follow the 2" x 4" rule: spaces of untreated glazing must have a maximum height of two inches and a maximum width of four inches. Birds cannot see untreated glazing and may attempt to fly through "openings" greater than these dimensions. 2" x 2" spacing is highly encouraged. Pattern elements should be at least 1/8" thick. Glazing treatment shall include at least one of the following:

- Bird safe glass approved for use by the American Bird Conservancy
- Fritted windows
- Patterned windows
- UV pattern film (not appropriate for all locations)
- Window nets
- Window screens
- Any American Bird Conservancy approved product: <https://abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/stop-birds-hitting-windows/>
- Other design measures identified by a qualified biologist with a background in ornithology as providing adequate bird protections and that do not conflict with required findings for a Planning Permit.

Lighting standards

Exterior lighting shall be downward cast only. Horizontal or upward cast lighting can attract or disorient birds and cause them to fly into windows. These lighting standards apply to any exterior lighting proposed by a project in an area where the standards apply.

Exceptions

The following may qualify for an exception to these requirements with approval of the Zoning Administrator:

- Projects on Historic buildings where meeting bird-safe glazing standards precludes the building from meeting Secretary of Interior's Standards or otherwise detracts from the design/historic character.
- Where an assessment completed by a qualified biologist with a background in ornithology and consistent with the Planning Department's Project Review Criteria for Bird-Safe Building Design Standards determines that the project as designed will not be detrimental to bird safety.
- First floor windows on buildings which require clear glazing due to the nature of the business or character of the area (e.g., retail uses).