



## Human Resources

Room 340  
411 West First Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

218-730-5210  
hrinformation  
@duluthmn.gov

DATE: May 8, 2023  
TO: Civil Service Board  
FROM: Heather DuVal  
Human Resources Supervisor  
SUBJECT: New Job Classification of Senior Plans Examiner

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL OF THE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE NEW CLASSIFICATION OF SENIOR PLANS EXAMINER.**

### **Background Information/Summary of Job**

The new job classification of Senior Plans Examiner is being created to fulfill the need for very high level, expert competence in complex code related work and the need for mentorship and training for other staff. This position requires full Minnesota Building Official Certification, similar to the Combination Construction Inspector and the Chief Building Inspector. This position will use advanced proficiency in interpreting and applying the building code and related regulations, works somewhat independently, assists with coaching and training others in the plan review process and applying the building code, and works with others to develop informational materials and presentations for internal and external use. The Senior Plans Examiner must possess a high level of knowledge and understanding of building codes and their administration.

The new job description for Senior Plans Examiner was brought forward to, and approved by, the Civil Service Board at the meeting on January 10, 2023. Further revisions added following the previous approval of this job description include additional essential duties. These duties include identifying deficiencies in life safety requirements in buildings of all construction types; serving as technical expert and conducting presentations to provide information to other City divisions; assisting homeowners, designers, and contractors in mitigating risk; organizing and leading pre-review meetings; acting as deputy of the Building Official; and performing public outreach to educate design professionals.

The proposed job description has been shared with the Basic Union, and they are in agreement.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the above information, and in accordance with Section 13-7 of the Civil Service Code, I recommend that the Civil Service Board approve the new job classification and description for Senior Plans Examiner.

## **Senior Plans Examiner**

### **SUMMARY/PURPOSE**

Under the authority of the Minnesota State Building Code and the Building Official, protect the community, first responders, and property from hazard, injury, and destruction by overseeing design of construction in the city of Duluth through review of applications and construction documents for all construction work. Provide advanced code-related technical expertise to the Construction Services & Inspections team, contractors, architects, engineers, drafters, and others.

### **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS**

The Senior Plans Examiner uses advanced proficiency in interpreting and applying the state building code and related regulations, works somewhat independently, assists with coaching and training others in the plan review process and applying the building code, and works with others to develop informational materials and presentations for internal and external use. The Senior Plans Examiner must possess a high level of knowledge and understanding of building codes and their administration.

### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED**

The supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines and assists incumbents with unusual situations which do not have clear precedents. Incumbents plan and carry out the successive steps and handle problems and deviations in the work assignment in accordance with instructions, policies, previous training, or accepted practices in the occupation.

### **SUPERVISION GIVEN**

Does not have direct supervisory responsibility but does have some oversight of employees and input regarding performance on a regular basis.

### **ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Review all types of construction documents (such as site, civil, architectural, and structural plans, geotechnical reports, specifications, and calculations) prepared by architects, engineers, contractors, and owners to ensure compliance with building codes, ordinances, statutes, and life safety regulations.
2. Identify aspects of plans that do not comply with the required codes and standards, and communicate code requirements to architects, engineers, contractors, and owners for corrections.
3. Compose plan review comment letters documenting non-compliances, requesting corrections, and obtaining all necessary information for a complete, accurate, compliant set of construction documents to be used for construction.
4. Compile complete construction documents to be used by inspectors to ensure construction complies with codes and standards.
5. Interpret and explain code requirements to inspectors, and provide them with technical support to resolve field related code issues
6. Perform field inspections to observe site conditions and provide guidance to inspectors, contractors, architects, engineers, and others in problem-solving during construction.
7. Advise design professionals (architects, engineers, surveyors, etc.), developers, contractors, drafters, inspectors, homeowners, and others regarding how designs comply with applicable codes and standards.
8. Verify that engineers and architects have used appropriate criteria for building design.
9. Accurately identify deficiencies in critical aspects of the life safety requirements in buildings of all construction types, heights, areas, and occupancies, and any combination thereof.
10. Serve as a technical expert, conduct presentations, and provide information to other City divisions, contractors, engineers, architects, and the public regarding codes, ordinances, and proper methods governing building design and construction work.
11. Assist homeowners, designers, and contractors in mitigating risk at the worksite by advising them of precautionary, safety, and fire prevention methods that may be employed during the construction phase of the work, and in navigating permitting, plan review, and inspection process.
12. Research regulations, codes, and standards, and construction methods and materials to determine code compliance and for consideration by the Building Official as permitted alternate materials, methods, and modifications.

13. Communicate effectively to explain complex technical requirements to constituents with all levels of experience, translating code language to common language.
14. Organize and lead pre-plan-review meetings with architects, engineers, developers, and others to discuss projects in the design phase and provide preliminary feedback.
15. Through discussion and research, verify existing and/or proposed use, purpose, existing conditions, and occupancy classification of buildings and spaces to determine code requirements.
16. Maintain complete and accurate files, paper or digital, of plan reviews, approvals, meeting notes, and correspondence in CSI division records, including permitting and plan review software.
17. Make complex interpretations and recommendations regarding proposed equivalents, modifications, and determinations of technical infeasibility.
18. Monitor regulatory changes, incorporate updates in review as appropriate, and work with others to disseminate information about code applications or processes to coworkers and the public.
19. Work on the most complex reviews, projects, complaints, disputes, violations, and interpretations, facilitating timely review and response by all disciplines and work groups.
20. As a deputy of the Building Official, regularly exercise thoughtful independent judgment and decision-making in keeping with Building Official policy and interpretation.
21. Be an effective team member by exhibiting self-motivation, supporting other employees in handling tasks, interacting effectively and respectfully with others, showing a desire to contribute to the team effort, accepting assignments willingly, and completing tasks within agreed upon timelines.
22. Coordinate with various City departments, other government agencies, and community groups to develop methods of sharing resources, minimizing duplication, and simplifying procedures.
23. Coordinate and perform functions and programs for the City.
24. In collaboration with the supervisor, organize and direct the work activities of assigned team, and determine work priorities, assignments, and work schedules.
25. Establish and maintain positive working relationship with the supervisor and employees by maintaining two-way communication, producing consistent results, advocating for the team when appropriate, and offering expertise to improve processes, systems, and the organization.
26. Other duties may be assigned.

### JOB REQUIREMENTS

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed are representative of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required.

1. Education & Experience Requirements
  - A. Three (3) years of experience as a building plans examiner; AND
  - B. Within two (2) years of date of hire, be designated as a state plan reviewer, which requires the following:
    - a. A minimum of five (5) years of experience in performing plan review or inspections to ensure compliance with the Minnesota State Building Codes on schools, hospitals, nursing homes, colleges, dormitories, correctional facilities, or other complex buildings requiring review of structural, fire resistance, egress, mechanical, fire protections, and other miscellaneous elements such as hazardous occupancies, atriums, large assembly spaces, etc.
2. License Requirements
  - A. By date of hire, must obtain and maintain certification as a Certified Building Official from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry.
3. Knowledge Requirements
  - A. Expert knowledge of the entirety of the Minnesota Building Code and other related ordinances, laws, regulations, and manuals governing building design and construction.
  - B. Moderate knowledge of mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and fire codes.
  - C. Extensive knowledge of architectural design principles and building construction methods.
  - D. Knowledge of City of Duluth zoning ordinances and regulations.
  - E. Extensive knowledge of construction materials.
  - F. Knowledge of office methods and procedures.
  - G. Knowledge of nomenclature used in construction and plan review.

- H. Extensive knowledge of legal aspects of building code enforcement.
- I. Extensive knowledge of current architectural practices, procedures, and techniques, including specialty engineering.
- J. Knowledge of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry in order to evaluate designs for compliance with codes and regulations.
- K. Knowledge of basic engineering principles.
- L. Knowledge of building code development processes.
- M. Knowledge of resources used in research of building materials and methods.
- N. Knowledge of effective training and coaching practices.
- O. Knowledge of problem-solving and conflict-resolution techniques.
- P. Knowledge of applicable safety requirements.
- Q. Knowledge of, or the ability to learn, City policies and procedures.
- R. Knowledge of federal, state, and local laws, statutes, regulations, codes, and standards related to the area of responsibility.

4. Skill Requirements

- A. Skill in training and mentoring team members.
- B. Skill in researching construction materials and methods.
- C. Skill in researching code provisions to determine intent.
- D. Skill in mediation and dispute resolution.
- E. Skill in reading and interpreting legal descriptions, building plans, specifications, codes, and ordinances.
- F. Skill in communicating orally and in writing.
- G. Skill in properly applying building codes and ordinances.
- H. Skill in maintaining records and files, both paper and electronic.
- I. Skill in the operation of office equipment including, but not limited to, general computer systems, job required software applications, the internet, and modern office equipment.
- J. Skill in managing one's own time and the time of others.
- K. Skill in completing assignments accurately and with attention to detail.
- L. Skill in using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.

5. Ability Requirements

- A. Ability to read, understand, and discuss building codes, construction documents, and other material used in the design, regulation, and construction of buildings and sites.
- B. Ability to apply complex technical regulations to details of construction to determine compliance.
- C. Ability to write effectively to explain code issues and requirements to professionals and non-professionals.
- D. Ability to use a computer for communication, research, data entry, recordkeeping, and plan review.
- E. Ability to provide a high standard of public service in the form of clear, consistent, and timely communication with the public, contractors, architects, engineers, and others in the community.
- F. Ability to effectively multi-task and reorganize tasks to address priority items.
- G. Ability to work professionally and maintain composure with individuals experiencing a wide range of emotions related to their construction projects.
- H. Ability to interpret structural plans and calculations to determine correct design criteria is used, load paths are complete, and structural components are properly protected for fire-resistance.
- I. Ability to persuade people to work towards alternative solutions to problems.
- J. Ability to interpret instructions furnished in written, oral, or diagrammatic form.
- K. Ability to read and interpret complex legal regulations.
- L. Ability to create and maintain a positive working environment that welcomes diversity, ensures cooperation, and promotes respect by sharing expertise with team members, fostering safe work practices, and developing trusting work relationships.
- M. Ability to communicate and interact effectively with members of the public.
- N. Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
- O. Ability to recognize, analyze, and solve a variety of problems.
- P. Ability to organize and prioritize work while meeting multiple deadlines.

- Q. Ability to handle difficult and stressful situations with professional composure.
- R. Ability to work successfully as a member of a team and independently with moderate supervision.
- S. Ability to train and lead others.
- T. Ability to interpret and apply laws, contracts, regulations, policies, and procedures.
- U. Ability to enforce safety rules and regulations.
- V. Ability to maintain confidential information.
- W. Ability to demonstrate dependability, responsibility, and consistency in job performance.
- X. Ability to attend work as scheduled and/or required.

#### Physical Demands

The work requires some physical exertion such as long periods of standing; walking over rough, uneven, or rocky surfaces; recurring bending, crouching, stooping, stretching, reaching, or similar activities; recurring lifting of moderately heavy items such as record boxes. The work may require specific, but common, physical characteristics and abilities such as above.

#### Work Environment

The work environment involves moderate risks or discomforts requiring special safety precautions (e.g., working around moving parts, carts, or machines, or with contagious diseases or irritant chemicals). Employees may be required to use protective clothing or gear such as masks, gowns, coats, boots, goggles, gloves, or shields.

HR: HD	Union: Basic	EEOC:	CSB:	Class No:
WC:	Pay:	EEOF:	CC:	Resolution: