



Planning & Development Services Department

To: Building Development Stakeholders

Subject: Alternate Method Request Procedures - Bulletin

Date: February 14, 2020

Created By: Planning & Development Services Department and Fire Marshal's Office
City of New Braunfels

Purpose:

This bulletin is to provide information on **alternate method requests** of design, materials, or construction for customers who are required to obtain building permits in the City of New Braunfels. This process is in accordance with **section 104.10 and 104.11** of the ***International Building Code (IBC)*** which is currently adopted by the City. Information will include types of submittal documents accepted, and schedule of review by committee.

The City of New Braunfels Development Services Department in collaboration with the Fire Marshal's Office have developed a formal Alternate Method Request (AMR) process to allow the owner and/or owner's agent to apply for an alternate material, design and/or method of construction or other modification to any provision of the City's building construction codes. These codes include the City's Building, Fire, Residential, Energy Conservation, Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing codes. For the current list of adopted codes go to this link.
<https://www.nbtexas.org/1596/Updates>

Scope:

The AMR is required to show that the proposed design is satisfactory and complies with the intent of the provisions of the code, and that the material, method or work offered is, for the purpose intended, not less than the equivalent of that prescribed in the code in terms of quality, strength, effectiveness, fire resistance, durability and safety. Where the alternate material, design or method of construction is not approved, the building official or the fire marshal shall respond in writing, stating the reason why the AMR was not approved.

Note: The AMR process is for building and fire related codes only and shall not be applicable to other development related codes such as parking, tree preservation, landscaping, or zoning requirements. Appeal of a decision on an AMR may be made to the Building Standards Board.

AMR Process

The following process steps outline how the AMR will be submitted and reviewed.

1. AMRs will be reviewed on the 1st and the 3rd Wednesday of the month and the AMR is to be submitted no later than noon the Friday before the AMR review.
2. The AMR is to be submitted to Planning & Development Services using the attached application, a request letter and all supporting documentation. The AMR will be logged and routed electronically to the appropriate staff for review/recommendation ahead of the scheduled meeting.
3. One AMR is required for each item/code issue under consideration.
4. The request letter with a narrative explaining the code issue and the alternate method/material that is proposed will be prepared on company letterhead, signed and dated. See example p. 4.
5. The AMR must be signed and sealed by the Texas registered architect or licensed professional engineer of record when the alternate method request applies to a building or system that is required to be designed and sealed by the Texas Architectural Board Statute or the Texas Engineering Practice Act.
6. The AMR must be signed by the Owner if administrative controls are included in the AMR. Examples would include limitations on the use of the building, operational procedures, or necessary security measures in the application of the method.
7. One hard copy of the AMR application, letter of explanation, and all supporting documentation is required. Additional copies may be provided but are not required.
8. There is no fee at this time for an AMR submittal, but for consideration the project must have a building permit in review.
9. The applicant should deliver or mail AMR packages to:

City of New Braunfels
Building Permit Section
Attention: Building Official
550 Landa Street
New Braunfels, TX 78130

Or by email to: BuildingPermitTechs@nbtexas.org

10. The AMR will be routed to the appropriate staff for review. After staff review, the building official or the fire marshal will respond to the AMR by approving the request, approving the request with additional requirements, or denying the request. **The fire marshal will have final signature authority on any Fire Code related requests.** In any case, the ruling will be made in written form and the applicant will receive a copy of the ruling. If the AMR is approved, the applicant will be advised whether to submit revised building plans for approval or just to send a copy of the approved AMR to the relevant review team.
11. The estimated turnaround time for an AMR review and response is ten (10) business days.

Records

The AMR application and final decision of the Building or Fire Official shall become part of the permanent record of submittal for the project record. The AMR will also be assigned a number for future reference. If you have any questions about the Alternate Method Request process, please contact the Building Permit Section at BuildingPermitTechs@nbtexas.org or by phone at (830) 221-4060

Appeal of a decision taken on an AMR may be made by formal request to the Building Standards Board in accordance with applicable codes and ordinances.

Attachments:

1. Example format for AMR Letter to be submitted with application.
2. AMR Application form.

Summary:

This bulletin is informational in nature and is provided as a customer service initiative.

Prepared by:	Kevin Collins, PE, Building Official
Reviewed by:	Anthony Pitzer, Interim Fire Marshal
Authorized by:	Chris Looney, Director- Planning & Development Services Patrick O'Connell, Fire Chief

(EXAMPLE LETTER)
Customer's Company Letterhead

Date

Alternate Method Request
City of New Braunfels
Planning & Development Services Department
Building Permit Section
Attention: Building Official
550 Landa Street
New Braunfels, TX 78130

Re: Project Name
CP or Permit # (if applicable)
Code Issue

Dear CoNB Building or Fire Official,

At a minimum, please provide the following information on your Alternate Method Request letter;

- *Introduction: Identify the project and state that you are requesting consideration of an alternate method of construction, design, or materials.*
- *Code Issue: Identify the specific code section and code reference for which the AMR is proposed.*
- *Discussion/ Justification: Provide the rationale and supporting information, such as technical data, engineering calculations, field tests, requirements or allowances from other codes, etc. that may provide the basis for the City to accept the request. Proposed design documents (i.e., architectural or engineering plans) and the supporting information listed above should be attached to the request as needed to clarify the intent of the proposal.*
- *Conclusion: Provide a summary statement such as, "In our professional opinion, the proposed alternate method of design/ construction method/ materials will meet the intent of the Code and provide a level of safety equivalent to, or better than, that required by the Code."*

Sincerely,

Signature of Applicant

Signature of Owner (if applicable)

Attachment(s)



CITY OF NEW BRAUNFELS
Planning & Development Services Department
and FIRE MARSHALS OFFICE
ALTERNATE METHOD REQUEST APPLICATION

Project:	
Address:	
Owner's Name:	
CP# :	
Code Issue:	
Code Reference:	
Code Sections:	

For Office Use Only:

AMR#: _____ Date Received: _____ Receipt#: _____

Submitted by:	
Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Owners Agent
Company:	
Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Tel #:	Fax #:
Email:	
Signature:	

Building or Fire Code Official Action:

APPROVED APPROVED W/ COMMENTS DENIED

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

Comments: _____