



**SIERRA COUNTY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING**  
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**FORM NUMBER**

**BD-06**

## **SNOW LOAD DESIGN REQUIREMENTS**

**NOTE:** Sierra County Code 12.04.100 – Snow Load Requirements, and the associated local Snow Loads Case Study, **are no longer applicable or enforced** due to changes in the 2025 California Building Standards Codes that now reference standard ASCE 7-22. That referenced standard now incorporates an online Hazard Tool that determines the various design loads (including snow load) for each project’s location.

To get started using the ASCE Hazard Tool for Ground Snow Loads go to: <https://ascehazardtool.org>

*FAQ: Why did the minimum design snow load go up so drastically? What if the “mapped elevation” shown for my project site is significantly different than the actual elevation?*

Answer: The Sierra County-specific Snow Load Case Study is no longer used. The ASCE 7-22 Design Ground Snow Load Geodatabase that is referenced in the 2025 Cal. Residential Code (Sec. R301.2.3 and Fig. 301.2[3]) and Cal. Building Code (Sec. 1608 and Figs. 1608.2) provides values for the coterminous United States on an approximately one-half mile by one-half mile grid. For areas with a significant elevation difference over a short distance, compare the Mapped Elevation provided in the Details tab with the actual elevation of your site. In instances of significant difference over 500 feet, use the Find on Map option to select a location up to one-half mile away with a Mapped Elevation that better matches the actual elevation of your location. Note, too, that min. design ground snow loads using the new ASCE Hazard Tool will differ between the Residential Code (“CRC”) and the Building Code (“CBC”), as well as based on the risk category of the structure itself (see CBC Table 1604.5; e.g., Risk Category I = agricultural and minor storage facilities like barns and detached garages; Risk Category IV = hospitals, fire, rescue, ambulance and police stations, etc.; Risk Category II = most other structures including residences and most commercial buildings).

If you are having difficulty determining the proper snow load design for your project—or if you have significant disagreement with the ground snow load value produced by the referenced standard (ASCE 7-22 and the online Hazard Tool), please reach out to the Sierra County Building Official with specific location information and the Risk Category and Building Occupancy.

The Sierra County Building Official will consider written proposed Alternative Methods and Materials (see Form BD-29) that utilize ASCE 7-16 and the old local Snow Load Case Study or other methods, on a case-by-case basis. Such requests must be prepared and stamped by a licensed design professional.