
State of California
California Department of Technology
Internet Domain Name Taxonomy

Preparation Instructions

Statewide Information Management Manual – Section 40A

August 2018

REVISION HISTORY

REVISION	DATE OF RELEASE	OWNER	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
Initial Release	May 2017	California Department of Technology	New
Minor Revisions	August 2018	California Department of Technology	Clarify domain information

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Section 1: General Information

The United States General Services Administration (GSA) is responsible for managing the registration of “.gov” top-level internet domain names. The “.gov” domain is primarily used to promote government services and increase the ease of finding government related information. In order to extend the use of this domain to state and local entities, the GSA has delegated the State of California authority to administer the “ca.gov” second-level domain. As part of this delegated authority, the Government Operations Agency (GovOps) will be responsible for overseeing the “ca.gov” domain name program and the California Department of Technology (CDT) will manage the registration, change, and certification process for “ca.gov” domains.

Per SAM Section 4819.2, a Domain Name Service (DNS) is defined as a series of computer databases that resolve or link Internet Protocol (IP) addresses with an alphanumeric domain name. Domain names are divided into hierarchical fields separated by a period. The field to the farthest right is the top-level (or first-level) domain, in “ca.gov” for example, “gov” is the top-level domain. In the same example, “ca” is the second-level within the domain, and the field to the left of the second-level domain is the third-level domain (e.g., cdt.ca.gov). Names that fall to the right of the domain following a “/” are subdirectories of the domain (e.g., ca.gov/services).

The “ca.gov” domain name promotes official state entity, county, city, or cross-agency government websites of the State of California. Users of websites or other internet services with a DNS record within this zone can be assured they are accessing an official California governmental resource.

Section 2: Policy and Terminology

In order to administer the “ca.gov” second-level domain, CDT has established the following protocols and instructions that are consistent with state policy and federal guidelines, see SAM [Section 5195](#) for Internet Domain Name policies. The “ca.gov” domain naming conventions established in this document are consistent with federal policy and guidelines including, but not limited to, [41 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 102-173](#) and the Federal Interagency Committee on Government Information’s Recommendations for Federal Public Websites.

Section 3: Organization Types

Section 3.1: State Entities

This category includes every state office, officer, department, independent board, and independent commission, including Constitutional Officers, the State Compensation Insurance Fund, the Legislature, and Legislative Counsel Bureau.

ca.gov Sub-Domains	Permitted Examples	NOT Permitted Examples
Each State Entity domain name should be the name of the organization, acronym, or recognizable derivative followed by “.ca.gov”. Each State Entity shall have only one such domain.	departmentoftransportation.ca.gov OR dot.ca.gov OR caltrans.ca.gov	cars.ca.gov OR cotForTrucks.ca.gov

Third-Level Domain Names	Permitted Examples	NOT Permitted Examples
State Entities may not register programs, initiatives, individual units, or divisions within their agency as a third or lower level domain name, but can use a subdirectory or sub-domain within the domain that the State Entity already owns.	sos.ca.gov/safeathome OR safeathome.sos.ca.gov ftb.ca.gov/readyreturn OR readyreturn.ftb.ca.gov	safeathome.ca.gov OR readyreturn.ca.gov

Section 3.2: Counties

This category includes all of the 58 counties within the State of California.

ca.gov Sub-Domains	Permitted Examples	NOT Permitted Examples
Each county government domain name should be “countyof” followed by the name of the county OR the name of the county followed by “county.ca.gov” OR in the case that there is no city with the same name, the name of the county followed by “.ca.gov”.	countyofyolo.ca.gov OR yolocounty.ca.gov countyofsanmateo.ca.gov OR sanmateocounty.ca.gov calaveras.ca.gov	yolo.ca.gov sanmateo.ca.gov

County Program Domain Names	Permitted Examples	NOT Permitted Examples
Counties may not register local programs or initiatives as separate domains. County programs, initiatives, fire departments, etc. shall use a subdirectory or sub-domain within the domain that the county already owns.	countyofyolo.ca.gov/fire OR yolocounty.ca.gov/fire fire.countyofyolo.ca.gov OR fire.yolocounty.ca.gov countyofsanmateo.ca.gov/library OR library.sanmateocounty.ca.gov	fireyolo.ca.gov YoloSummerProgram.ca.gov

Section 3.3: Cities

This category includes all cities and towns within the State of California.

ca.gov Sub-Domains	Permitted Examples	NOT Permitted Examples
Each city government domain name should be “cityof” followed by the name of the city OR the name of the city followed by “ <i>city.ca.gov</i> ” OR in the case that there is no county with the same name, just the name of the city followed by “.ca.gov”.	cityofsacramento.ca.gov OR sacramentocity.ca.gov cityofbeverlyhills.ca.gov OR beverlyhillscity.ca.gov piedmont.ca.gov	sac.ca.gov sacramento.ca.gov

City Program Domain Names	Permitted Examples	NOT Permitted Examples
Cities may not register local programs or initiatives as separate domains. City programs, initiatives, fire departments, etc. shall use a subdirectory or sub-domain within the domain that the city already owns.	cityofsacramento.ca.gov/fire OR sacramentocity.ca.gov/fire OR fire.cityofsacramento.ca.gov OR fire.sacramentocity.ca.gov OR countyofsanmateo.ca.gov/library OR library.sanmateocounty.ca.gov	fire.ca.gov SacramentoFire.ca.gov

Section 3.4: Other

This category includes all government groups that do not fall into one of the categories listed above, including, but not limited to Joint Powers Authorities, Appointed Task Forces, Fusion Centers, and Special Districts.

ca.gov Sub-Domains	Permitted Examples	NOT Permitted Examples
The domain name must not be misleading to the public. Permitted domain names include the group’s formal full name per their charter or the acronym of the group’s formal full name. Each independent group shall have only one such domain.	NapaValleyTransportationAuth ority.ca.gov (based on a Joint Powers Authority’s official full name) nvta.ca.gov (based on the official acronym of a Joint Powers Authority)	TransAuth.ca.gov nvtag.ca.gov

Program Domain Names	Permitted Examples	NOT Permitted Examples
Programs or initiatives cannot be registered as separate domains. Programs and initiatives shall use a subdirectory or sub-domain within the domain that the group already owns.	NapaValleyTransportationAuthority.ca.gov/Incentive Incentive.nvta.ca.gov nvta.ca.gov/incentive	Incentive.ca.gov NapaProgram.ca.gov

Section 4: Requests for Internet Domain

A request for a new “ca.gov” internet domain must be submitted to CDT using the online [Domain Name Request System](#). The system will guide users through the process of requesting new domains whether the user represents a state entity, county, city, or other government entity.

Section 4.1: Online Domain Name Request System Instructions

1. To request a new “ca.gov” domain name:
 - a. Navigate to <https://domainnamerequest.cdt.ca.gov/>.
 - b. Click “Check if the domain I want is available.”
 - c. Type the desired domain name in this format: <<NameRequesting.ca.gov>> (i.e., CityofStockton.ca.gov) and click “Check.”
 - d. If the screen says your requested domain is available, click “Submit a Request.” Otherwise, click “Try a different one” which will bring you to the previous screen to enter a different domain name.
 - e. Type the desired domain name in this format: <<NameRequesting.ca.gov>> (i.e., CityofStockton.ca.gov) and click “Check.”
 - f. If the screen says your requested domain is available, click “Submit a Request.” Otherwise, click “Try a different one” which will bring you to the previous screen to enter a different domain name.
 - g. If you are a new user, click “Register as a new user” to enter your Email (required), Repeat Email (required, just enter your same email again), First Name (required), Middle Initial (optional), Last Name (required), Phone1 (optional), and Phone2 (optional). Click “I’m not a robot” in the reCAPTCHA box. Then click “Register”. If you are not a new user, enter your email address and click “Send Key.” A six digit user key will be sent to your email.
 - h. Enter the user key and click “Log In.”
 - i. Select your organization type for either a State Entity, County, City, or Other, see Section 3 for descriptions of each organization type.
 - i. If you select “State Entity”, “County”, or “City”, the screen will display a list specific to your selection. If you select “Other”, enter your organization’s name and click “Next”.
 - ii. Based on your selection, screen prompts may appear to assist in selecting a compliant domain name.
 1. Enter a “Short Description” of your domain’s purpose. Enter a “Justification” of why this domain is needed. Enter “Planned Use Months,” from the drop-down, and select your Contact Type (whether

- you are the CIO or CIO Equivalent, Administrative, Technical, or Emergency contact. The same person may serve more than one of these roles). Designate whether your domain is delegated.
2. Read the State Administrative Manual (SAM) [Section 5195](#) and Statewide Information Management Manual (SIMM) [Section 40A](#). Select the check box next to “I have read and agree to abide by the SAM and SIMM” to accept that you have read and abide by Internet Domain Name policies.
 3. Click “Next.” This will take you to your contacts page where you can designate your domain’s contacts. CIO or CIO Equivalent, Administrative, and Technical contacts are required. The same person may serve more than one of these roles. Emergency contact is required if your domain is “delegated.” Multiple people can be assigned as Administrative, Technical, and Emergency contacts. Click on each contact type listed to provide that contact’s information. Also click on “CIO or CIO Equivalent Document Required” to attach a file that shows your Chief Information Officer (CIO) or CIO Equivalent’s approval of this exact domain. Select the Document Type, click “Browse...” to choose a file to upload, and then click “Upload.” The CIO or CIO Equivalent’s approval is required. After uploading your file, you may also add additional attachments that may help support your request by clicking “Add New Document”. Select the Document Type, click “Browse...” to choose a file to upload, and then click “Upload.”
 4. Click “Submit Request.” This will generate a request to CDT.
 5. The system will take you to a screen showing your requested domain(s) and status. You can click on your domain to edit your domain’s details, documents, and contacts.
 6. A CDT representative will respond within five (5) business days to inform the requestor of the status and any additional information required.
2. To claim an existing “ca.gov” domain, when the domain exists in the system, but you are not yet listed as a contact:
- a. Navigate to <https://domainnamerequest.cdt.ca.gov/>.
 - b. Click “Join an existing domain.”
 - c. If you are a new user, click “Register as a new user” to enter your Email (required), Repeat Email (required, just enter your same email again), First Name (required), Middle Initial (optional), Last Name (required), Phone1 (optional), and Phone2 (optional). Click “I’m not a robot” in the reCAPTCHA box. Then click “Register”. If you are not a new user, enter your email address and click “Send Key.” A six digit user key will be sent to your email.
 - d. Enter the user key and click “Log In.”
 - e. In the “ca.gov domain” field, enter the name of the domain you are claiming to be a contact for.
 - f. Specify your Contact Type, whether you are the CIO or CIO Equivalent, Administrative, Technical, or Emergency contact.
 - g. Enter a justification in the “Justification” field, (i.e., “I am the new technical lead for this department website.”)

- h. Click “Claim.”
 - i. A CDT representative will respond within five (5) business days to inform the requestor of the status (if you have been added to the system as a contact for the domain, or if any additional information is required).
3. To manage your existing domains and requests after you submit a request, or if you are already an existing contact for at least one “ca.gov” domain:
 - a. Navigate to <https://domainnamerequest.cdt.ca.gov/>.
 - b. Click “Manage my existing domains and requests.”
 - c. Enter your email address and click “Send Key.” A six digit user key will be sent to your email.
 - d. Enter the user key and click “Log In.”
 - e. You will see a list of all “ca.gov” domains that you are a contact for. Click on a domain to view or edit details.

For questions or technical issues, click on “Contact Us” at the bottom of the Domain Request System screen to send a message.

Section 4.2: Appeals

An appeal to a rejection of a domain name request may be submitted within two (2) weeks of notification of a determination on the request. Appeals should be submitted online through the [Domain Name Request System](#). Log into your account and select the domain you wish to appeal. Click on “Submit Appeal,” complete the form, and click “Submit.” A GovOps representative will provide a status to the requestor within five (5) business days.

1. Navigate to <https://domainnamerequest.cdt.ca.gov/>
2. Click “Manage my existing domains”.
3. Click on the domain name that was “Denied” which you want to appeal
4. Click “Submit Appeal” and enter the following fields:
 - First Name
 - Last Name
 - Email
 - Phone
 - Reason (why the denial decision should be overturned)
 - Additional Support (Attachment of charter, legal publication, or other documentation to support your request, if applicable)
5. Click “Save.” This will also upload any files you selected in the “Additional Support” field.
6. To upload additional files:
 - a. Click “Edit Appeal”
 - b. In the “Additional Support” field, click “Browse...” and select a file to upload
 - c. Click “Save.” All files that you have uploaded so far will appear on this page under “Supporting Documents”.

Note: Existing domain names that do not comply with current policies may not be used as precedent for appealing a decision as these domains may have been grandfathered-in. Pointing to an example of a similar domain is not adequate justification to approve a non-compliant domain.

Section 4.3: Annual Re-certification

All entities that use the “ca.gov” internet domain are required to annually re-certify compliance with federal policy and guidelines using the online [Domain Name Request System](#). The annual re-certification process validates whether the domain(s) are still in use and the domain complies with federal policy and guidelines including, but not limited to, [41 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 102-173](#) and the Federal Interagency Committee on Government Information’s Recommendations for Federal Public Websites. The re-certification also confirms that the contact information associated with the domain is still current. Domain contacts includes the CIO or CIO Equivalent, Administrative, Technical, and the Emergency contacts if the domain is delegated. A reminder email will be sent to domain contacts before the annual expiration date with instructions for completing the annual re-certification using the online [Domain Name Request System](#). Alternatively, when users log into the system during the re-certification period, a “Renew Domain” button will be available for each domain up for renewal. This button takes you to the “Review Renewal” page that lists all required items. Complete all items marked with a red asterisk, then click the check box at the bottom to certify “I have reviewed this information and found it to be correct,” then click “Renew Domain” at the bottom. Detailed instructions are also available in the FAQ linked at the bottom footer of the [Domain Name Request System](#) website.

If the re-certification is not completed within ten (10) business days of the domain’s expiration date, a letter is sent to the appropriate CIO or CIO Equivalent with instructions to re-certify using the online system. Failure to complete this annual re-certification requirement may result in the removal of your domain name.

The Annual Re-certification Process Flow

