

Vetting a Developer and a Building for Seismic Safety in Turkey

A step-by-step guide: 7 steps, the documents, the red flags. Up to date for 2026; the seismic code in force is TBDY 2018.

It is not the earthquake that destroys a building - it is the cost-cutting at the construction stage. The difference between "it stood" and "it collapsed" comes from decisions made years before the tremor: what to build with, where to cut corners, who inspected the work. Since 1999 Turkey has built one of the strictest seismic control systems in the world - but it protects you only if the documents of your specific building are in order. Here is how to check.

— Two dates you need to know

2001

Independent construction supervision

After the 1999 Marmara earthquake, Law 4708 made supervision mandatory: every site is supervised by a licensed inspection firm (yapı denetim). Liability: 15 years for the load-bearing structure, 2 years for everything else - jointly with the designer and the contractor. Nationwide since 2011.

2019

The TBDY 2018 code

Projects are designed to the official AFAD seismic hazard map for the exact coordinates of the plot. Concrete of class C25 or higher, ribbed B420C/B500C reinforcement only, and a mandatory soil survey (zemin etüdü) before design.

— The three pillars of the system



Yapı denetim

A licensed firm checks every stage from excavation to handover, takes concrete samples at every pour and keeps the lab test records.



DASK

Compulsory state earthquake insurance: without it the TAPU cannot be registered. Coverage is capped by a state limit - a private policy is added for full protection.



The AFAD map

The official seismic hazard level for the exact coordinates of the plot, not "the region". Accessed via the e-Devlet state portal.

1 Request the Yapı Ruhsatı (building permit)

The issue date shows which code the design follows. A permit issued after 1 January 2019 = the current TBDY 2018, the strictest standard.

2 Request the zemin etüdü (soil survey)

What the ground is like and what foundation decisions were made. Weak coastal soil is common - the question is whether the foundations were designed for it (piles, a raft slab).

3 The yapı denetim file (supervision)

Stage-by-stage inspection reports and the lab test records for the concrete. A trustworthy developer hands them over readily.

4 Match the materials to the design

The concrete class (C25+) and reinforcement type (B420C/B500C) in the structural design and in the test records must match.

5 Check the address on the AFAD map

The precise hazard level of the plot. The map is accessed via e-Devlet; if you have no access, your expert will run the check.

6 For a finished building - the iskan

Genel İskan (the building occupancy permit) and Ferdi İskan (the individual apartment permit). If there is a Yapı Kayıt Belgesi instead of an iskan (the 2018 amnesty), the building was legalised by the owner's declaration, with no technical inspection.

7 For pre-2000 resales - a seismic performance test

Order a deprem performans testi and check whether the building carries "riskli yapı" (risky building) status.

⚠ 5 red flags

- No iskan, "we will arrange it later"
- A Yapı Kayıt Belgesi instead of an iskan: amnesty legalisation with no technical inspection
- A pre-2000 building with no seismic performance test
- A "shop-window" ground floor: load-bearing walls removed for retail in older buildings
- The developer withholds the supervision file or the concrete test records

Want us to run the check for you? We will request the full seismic file for a specific building, check the address on the AFAD map and send you a full deal cost breakdown. WhatsApp **+971 58 580 0932**

The full guide to buying property in Turkey: anpaestate.com/en/blog/turkey-property-guide-2026