



Introduction

The purpose of this technical bulletin is to clarify when a soils investigation is required as part of a building permit application. The requirements below are intended as general policy guidelines. The Building Official may require a soils investigation for any project. Where a soils investigation is required, it shall conform to the requirements of Chapter 18 of the California Building Code.

General

In all cases, if a soils report has been previously performed for the parcel, this report must be included in the application. If the existing report is more than two years old, a soils report review letter from a qualified licensed professional must be included with the application. The recommendations of the report and review letter must be followed.

Technical Details

A soils investigation is required as follows:

1. New or replacement other than Occupancy Group R-3 or U (Groups A, B, E, F, H, I, M, R-1, R-2, and S Occupancies) – soils investigation: **REQUIRED**
 - Trash enclosures, storage buildings, and other accessory structures to such building which are not occupied by human beings: **NOT REQUIRED**

2. New or replacement single family dwelling, second unit, or guest house—soils investigation **REQUIRED** when any of the following conditions exist, as determined by site review or mapped information:
 - Area of suspected slides, slumps, or soil creep
 - Area of previous fill placement
 - Area of suspected expansive soil
 - Area without sufficient slope setback
 - Area subject to possible liquefaction
 - Area of suspected soft, compressible, or organic soil with low bearing capacity
 - Area without recommended setback from stream
 - Area of high moisture content in soil
 - Area subject to high erosion
 - Area of soft soil due to past deep ripping or cultivation below minimum foundation depth
 - Area within 1000 feet of a solid waste disposal site
 - There is evidence of structural failure of the existing foundation due to soil conditions
 - When the structure is not light wood frame construction

(OVER)

3. New or replacement garage, storage building, workshop, pool house, studio, barn or other structure in which occupants do not live—soils investigation **REQUIRED** if:
 - Area without sufficient slope setback
 - Area without recommended setback from stream
 - Proposed building is potentially hazardous to other structures
 - There is evidence of structural failure of the existing foundation due to soil conditions
4. Remodels with no increase in square footage and no foundation repair or upgrade—soils investigation **NOT REQUIRED**
5. Room additions—soils investigation **NOT REQUIRED** if:
 - The proposed foundation is the same type as the existing foundation and,
 - The existing foundation is a perimeter or pier and grade beam foundation and,
 - The existing foundation complied with the code when it was constructed, if a building code was adopted at that time, and
 - The addition has sufficient slope and stream setback, and
 - There is no evidence of structural failure of the existing foundation due to soil conditions, and
 - The proposed foundation complies with current code, and
 - If the proposed foundation is a pier and grade beam foundation, the piers must be the same depth as the existing piers
6. Room additions—soils investigation **REQUIRED** if:
 - The proposed work does not comply with Number 5 above or,
 - Any of the conditions described in Number 3 exist
7. Foundation upgrades—soils investigation **REQUIRED** if:
 - There is evidence of structural failure of the existing foundation due to soil conditions
 - The area is without sufficient slope or stream setbacks
8. Elevations to raise structure above the base flood elevations—soils investigation **NOT REQUIRED**
9. Swimming pools—soils investigation **NOT REQUIRED** if
 - Expansive soil is assumed in the pool design and
 - Soils investigation is not required by the product listing
10. Change of occupancy—soils investigation **NOT REQUIRED** if
 - The foundation complied with the code when it was constructed, and
 - There is no evidence of structural failure of the existing foundation due to soil conditions