



Subject: Soils Report – Where Not Required

Objective: Provide alternative for soils report requirements of Section 1802 for one- and two-family dwellings of light-frame construction

Background: The new provisions of the 2007 California Building Code (CBC) require a soils report for all structures in Seismic Design Category (SDC) D, E and F with no exceptions for small projects. This policy provides an alternative for small projects provided specific design criteria are met.

POLICY:

All new buildings and structures shall require a foundation and soils investigation report per Section 1802 of the 2007 CBC, including evaluation for corrosivity potential. The soils report shall be prepared, wet stamped and signed by a licensed soils or geotechnical engineer.

A soils report may not be required for the following types of projects provided all the minimum design requirements listed below are used in the design of the project:

1. Interior alterations to existing single family dwellings
2. One-story and two-story additions to an existing single family dwelling, where the area of the new foundation is 500 sf or less
3. Accessory structures to an existing single family dwelling such as patio covers, carports and detached one-story garages
4. Light standards where the height is 25 feet or less
5. Fences, block walls and monument signs where the height is 8 feet or less
6. Retaining walls retaining 6 feet or less of level grade

Minimum Design Requirements (for projects without a soils report):

Design shall comply with all provisions of Ch. 16 & 18 of the 2007 CBC except as follows:

- a. Values for Class of Materials Type 5 per Table 1804.2 shall be used, except the allowable soil bearing pressure shall be limited to 1000 psf. An increase of one-third shall be permitted when using the alternate load combinations in Section 1605.3.2 that include wind or earthquake loads.
- b. Minimum depth of new footings below undisturbed ground surface shall be:
 - i. 12 inches for one-story structures
 - ii. 18 inches for two-story structures
- c. New continuous footings for buildings shall have a minimum reinforcement of either:
 - i. (2) #4 at top and (2) #4 at bottom, OR
 - ii. (1) #5 at top and (1) #5 at bottom

Note: The building official reserves the right to require a soils report where questionable soil or slope instability conditions at the site warrant a foundation and soils investigation.