

Subject: Building Site Geotechnical Investigations

To: Building Department Customers

The California Building Code, Section 1802, requires that a Geotechnical Investigation be conducted for all building sites. Geotechnical investigations shall be conducted in accordance with California Building Code Sections 1802.1.1 through 1802.6. "Additional studies shall be made as necessary to evaluate slope stability, soil strength, position and adequacy of load bearing soils, the effect of moisture variation on soil-bearing capacity, compressibility, liquefaction and expansiveness."

Section 1802.2 Exception:, the exception, states that the Building Official *may* waive the requirement for a geotechnical investigation "where satisfactory data from adjacent areas is available that demonstrates an investigation is not necessary for any of the conditions in Sections 1802.2.1 through 1802.6 and Sections 1803 and 1803.6."

In seeking a waiver for requirements of Section 1802, it shall be the permit holder's responsibility to submit a request *in writing* to the Building Department requesting the waiver and that the permit holder accepts full and absolute responsibility for any adverse consequences of waiving the requirements of Section 1802. The permit holder shall submit *written* evidence for the reasons for the waiver that demonstrates an investigation is not necessary for any of the conditions in Sections 1802.2.1 through 1802.6 and Sections 1803 and 1803.6.



Mike Kinslow
Building Director
Mariposa County

CHAPTER 18

SOILS AND FOUNDATIONS

SECTION 1801 GENERAL

1801.1 Scope. The provisions of this chapter shall apply to building and foundation systems in those areas not subject to scour or water pressure by wind and wave action. Buildings and foundations subject to such scour or water pressure loads shall be designed in accordance with Chapter 16.

1801.2 Design. Allowable bearing pressures, allowable stresses and design formulas provided in this chapter shall be used with the allowable stress design load combinations specified in Section 1605.3. The quality and design of materials used structurally in excavations, footings and foundations shall conform to the requirements specified in Chapters 16, 19, 21, 22 and 23 of this code. Excavations and fills shall also comply with Chapter 33.

[HCD 1] For limited-density owner-built rural dwellings, pier foundations, stone masonry footings and foundations, pressure-treated lumber, poles, or equivalent foundation materials or designs may be used provided that the bearing is sufficient for the purpose intended.

1801.2.1 Foundation design for seismic overturning. Where the foundation is proportioned using the load combinations of Section 1605.2, and the computation of the seismic overturning moment is by the equivalent lateral-force method or the modal analysis method, the proportioning shall be in accordance with Section 12.13.4 of ASCE 7.

SECTION 1802 FOUNDATION AND SOILS INVESTIGATIONS

1802.1 General. Foundation and soils investigations shall be conducted in conformance with Sections 1802.2 through 1802.8. Where required by the building official, the classification and investigation of the soil shall be made by a registered design professional.

1802.1.1 General and where required for applications listed in Section 108.2.1.1 regulated by the Department of Housing and Community Development. [HCD 1] Foundation and soils investigations shall be conducted in conference with Health and Safety Code Sections 17953 through 17955 as summarized below.

1802.1.1.1 Preliminary soil report. Each city, county, or city and county shall enact an ordinance which requires a preliminary soil report, prepared by a civil engineer who is registered by the state. The report shall be based upon adequate test borings or excavations, of every subdivision, where a tentative and final map is required pursuant to Section 66426 of the Government Code.

The preliminary soil report may be waived if the building department of the city, county or city and county, or other enforcement agency charged with the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this part, shall

determine that, due to the knowledge such department has as to the soil qualities of the soil of the subdivision or lot, no preliminary analysis is necessary.

1802.1.1.2 Soil investigation by lot, necessity, preparation, and recommendations. If the preliminary soil report indicates the presence of critically expansive soils or other soil problems which, if not corrected, would lead to structural defects, such ordinance shall require a soil investigation of each lot in the subdivision.

The soil investigation shall be prepared by a civil engineer who is registered in this state. It shall recommend corrective action which is likely to prevent structural damage to each dwelling proposed to be constructed on the expansive soil.

1802.1.1.3 Approval, building permit conditions, appeal. The building department of each city, county or city and county, or other enforcement agency charged with the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this part, shall approve the soil investigation if it determines that the recommended action is likely to prevent structural damage to each dwelling to be constructed. As a condition to the building permit, the ordinance shall require that the approved recommended action be incorporated in the construction of each dwelling. Appeal from such determination shall be to the local appeals board.

1802.2 Where required. The owner or applicant shall submit a foundation and soils investigation to the building official where required in Sections 1802.2.1 through 1802.2.7.

Exception: The building official need not require a foundation or soils investigation where satisfactory data from adjacent areas is available that demonstrates an investigation is not necessary for any of the conditions in Sections 1802.2.1 through 1802.2.6.

[OSHPD 2] Geotechnical reports are not required for one-story, wood-frame and light-steel-frame buildings of Type V construction and 4,000 square feet (371 m²) or less in floor area, not located within Earthquake Fault Zones or Seismic Hazard Zones as shown in the most recently published maps from California Geological Survey (CGS). Allowable foundation and lateral soil pressure values may be determined from Table 1804.2.

1802.2.1 Questionable soil. Where the classification, strength or compressibility of the soil are in doubt or where a load-bearing value superior to that specified in this code is claimed, the building official shall require that the necessary investigation be made. Such investigation shall comply with the provisions of Sections 1802.4 through 1802.6.

1802.2.2 Expansive soils. In areas likely to have expansive soil, the building official shall require soil tests to determine where such soils do exist.

1802.2.3 Ground-water table. A subsurface soil investigation shall be performed to determine whether the existing ground-water table is above or within 5 feet (1524 mm) below the elevation of the lowest floor level where such floor is located below the finished ground level adjacent to the foundation.

Exception: A subsurface soil investigation shall not be required where waterproofing is provided in accordance with Section 1807.

1802.2.4 Pile and pier foundations. Pile and pier foundations shall be designed and installed on the basis of a foundation investigation and report as specified in Sections 1802.4 through 1802.6 and Section 1808.2.2.

1802.2.5 Rock strata. Where subsurface explorations at the project site indicate variations or doubtful characteristics in the structure of the rock upon which foundations are to be constructed, a sufficient number of borings shall be made to a depth of not less than 10 feet (3048 mm) below the level of the foundations to provide assurance of the soundness of the foundation bed and its load-bearing capacity.

1802.2.6 Seismic Design Category C. Where a structure is determined to be in Seismic Design Category C in accordance with Section 1613, an investigation shall be conducted and shall include an evaluation of the following potential hazards resulting from earthquake motions: slope instability, liquefaction and surface rupture due to faulting or lateral spreading.

1802.2.7 Seismic Design Category D, E or F. Where the structure is determined to be in Seismic Design Category D, E or F, in accordance with Section 1613, the soils investigation requirements for Seismic Design Category C, given in Section 1802.2.6, shall be met, in addition to the following. The investigation shall include:

1. A determination of lateral pressures on basement and retaining walls due to earthquake motions.
2. An assessment of potential consequences of any liquefaction and soil strength loss, including estimation of differential settlement, lateral movement or reduction in foundation soil-bearing capacity, and shall address mitigation measures. Such measures shall be given consideration in the design of the structure and can include but are not limited to ground stabilization, selection of appropriate foundation type and depths, selection of appropriate structural systems to accommodate anticipated displacements or any combination of these measures. The potential for liquefaction and soil strength loss shall be evaluated for site peak ground acceleration magnitudes and source characteristics consistent with the design earthquake ground motions. Peak ground acceleration shall be determined from a site-specific study taking into account soil amplification effects, as specified in Chapter 21 of ASCE 7.

Exception: A site-specific study need not be performed, provided that peak ground acceleration equal to $S_{DS}/2.5$ is used, where S_{DS} is determined in accordance with Section 21.2.1 of ASCE 7.

1802.3 Soil classification. Where required, soils shall be classified in accordance with Section 1802.3.1 or 1802.3.2.

1802.3.1 General. For the purposes of this chapter, the definition and classification of soil materials for use in Table 1804.2 shall be in accordance with ASTM D 2487.

1802.3.2 Expansive soils. Soils meeting all four of the following provisions shall be considered expansive, except that tests to show compliance with Items 1, 2 and 3 shall not be required if the test prescribed in Item 4 is conducted:

1. Plasticity index (PI) of 15 or greater, determined in accordance with ASTM D 4318.
2. More than 10 percent of the soil particles pass a No. 200 sieve (75 μ m), determined in accordance with ASTM D 422.
3. More than 10 percent of the soil particles are less than 5 micrometers in size, determined in accordance with ASTM D 422.
4. Expansion index greater than 20, determined in accordance with ASTM D 4829.

1802.4 Investigation. Soil classification shall be based on observation and any necessary tests of the materials disclosed by borings, test pits or other subsurface exploration made in appropriate locations. Additional studies shall be made as necessary to evaluate slope stability, soil strength, position and adequacy of load-bearing soils, the effect of moisture variation on soil-bearing capacity, compressibility, liquefaction and expansiveness.

1802.4.1 Exploratory boring. The scope of the soil investigation including the number and types of borings or soundings, the equipment used to drill and sample, the in-situ testing equipment and the laboratory testing program shall be determined by a registered design professional.

1802.5 Soil boring and sampling. The soil boring and sampling procedure and apparatus shall be in accordance with generally accepted engineering practice. The registered design professional shall have a fully qualified representative on the site during all boring and sampling operations.

1802.6 Reports. The soil classification and design load-bearing capacity shall be shown on the construction document. Where required by the building official, a written report of the investigation shall be submitted that includes, but need not be limited to, the following information:

1. A plot showing the location of test borings and/or excavations.
2. A complete record of the soil samples.
3. A record of the soil profile.
4. Elevation of the water table, if encountered.
5. Recommendations for foundation type and design criteria, including but not limited to: bearing capacity of natural or compacted soil; provisions to mitigate the effects of expansive soils; mitigation of the effects of liquefaction, differential settlement and varying soil strength; and the effects of adjacent loads.
6. Expected total and differential settlement.

7. Pile and pier foundation information in accordance with Section 1808.2.2.
8. Special design and construction provisions for footings or foundations founded on expansive soils, as necessary.
9. Compacted fill material properties and testing in accordance with Section 1803.5.
10. [OSHPD 2] The report shall consider the effects of seismic hazard per Sections 1802A.7 and 1802A.8.

1802.7 Engineering geologic reports. [OSHPD 2]

1802.7.1 Geologic and earthquake engineering reports shall be required for all proposed construction.

Exceptions:

1. Reports are not required for one-story, wood-frame and light-steel-frame buildings of Type V construction and 4,000 square feet (371m²) or less in floor area, not located within Earthquake Fault Zones or Seismic Hazard Zones as shown in the most recently published maps from California Geological Survey (CGS); nonstructural, associated structural or nonrequired structural alterations and incidental structural additions or alterations, and structural repairs for other than earthquake damage (see Section 3402A.1 for definitions of terms in this section).
2. A previous report for a specific site may be resubmitted, provided that a reevaluation is made and the report is found to be currently appropriate.

1802.7.2 The purpose of the engineering geologic report shall be to identify geologic and seismic conditions that may require project mitigations. The reports shall contain data which provide an assessment of the nature of the site and potential for earthquake damage based on appropriate investigations of the regional and site geology, project foundation conditions and the potential seismic shaking at the site. The report shall be prepared by a California-certified engineering geologist in consultation with a California-registered geotechnical engineer.

The preparation of the engineering geologic report shall consider the most recent CGS Note 48: Checklist for the Review of Engineering Geology and Seismology Reports for California Public School, Hospitals, and Essential Services Buildings. In addition, the most recent version of CGS Special Publication 42: Fault Rupture Hazard Zones in California, shall be considered for project sites proposed within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The most recent version of CGS Special Publication 117: Guidelines for Evaluating and Mitigating Seismic Hazards in California, shall be considered for project sites proposed within a Seismic Hazard Zone. All conclusions shall be fully supported by satisfactory data and analysis.

The report shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

1. Geologic investigation.
2. Evaluation of the known active and potentially active faults, both regional and local.

3. Ground-motion parameters, as required by Section 1613 and ASCE 7.
4. Evaluation of slope stability at or near the site and;
5. The liquefaction and settlement potential of the earth materials in the foundation.

1802.8 Geotechnical and supplemental ground-response reports. [OSHPD 2]

1802.8.1 Geotechnical report. The geotechnical report shall provide completed evaluations of the foundation conditions of the site and the potential geologic/seismic hazards affecting the site. The geotechnical report shall include, but shall not be limited to, site-specific evaluations of design criteria related to the nature and extent of foundation materials, groundwater conditions, liquefaction potential, settlement potential and slope stability. The report shall contain the results of the analysis of problem areas identified in the engineering geologic report. The geotechnical report shall incorporate estimates of the characteristics of site ground motion provided in the engineering geologic report.

The geotechnical report shall be prepared by a geotechnical engineer registered in the state of California with the advice of the certified engineering geologist and other technical experts, as necessary. The approved engineering geologic report shall be submitted with or as part of the geotechnical report.

1802.8.2 Supplemental ground-response report. If site-specific ground-motion procedures, as set forth in ASCE 7 Chapter 21, or ground-motion time-history analysis, as set forth in ASCE 7 Chapter 16 or Section 17.3, are used for design, then a supplemental ground-response report may be required. All conclusions and ground-motion parameters shall be fully supported by satisfactory data and analysis.

1802.8.2.1 The ground-motion element shall be prepared by a registered geotechnical engineer or geophysicist (depending on the scope of the element), or engineering geologist licensed in the state of California, and having professional specialization in earthquake analysis. The ground-motion element shall present a detailed characterization of earthquake ground motions for the site, which incorporates data given in the geotechnical report. The level of ground motion considered by the ground-motion element shall be as described in ASCE 7 Chapter 21. The characterization of ground motion in the ground-motion element shall be given, according to the requirements of the analysis, in terms of:

1. Elastic structural response spectra.
2. Time-history plot of predicted ground motion at the site.
3. Other analyses in conformance with accepted engineering and seismological practice.

1802.8.2.2 The advanced geotechnical element shall contain the results of dynamic geotechnical analyses specified by the approved geotechnical report. Where