



CALISTOGA BUILDING DIVISION POLICIES, PROCEDURES & INTERPRETATIONS

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Enacted by: Brad Cannon CBO, Building Inspector Approved by: Board of Appeals
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Subject: SOILS INVESTIGATION REQUIREMENTS
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A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

The 2007 CBC Section 1802.2 requires a foundation and soils investigation where required by sections 1802.2.1 through 1802.2.7. Section 1802.2.7 requires a soils investigation where the structure is determined to be in Seismic Design Category D, E, or F. This section identifies several parameters that must be assessed within the investigation, including the peak ground acceleration.

Section 1802.2.7 seems to require a soils investigation for every structure where an existing investigation is not available. The issues of concern identified in Section 1802.2.7 are not known to exist in many areas of the City of Calistoga. Requiring an investigation for some structures or projects may be an expense to the applicant that would provide little or no benefit. Additionally, Section 1802.1 clearly states “where required by the building official...”

Furthermore, appendix Chapter 1, Section 104.1 authorizes the building official to render interpretations. Therefore, the following policy is the interpretation of this department and is in effect until revised or deleted.

B. POLICY:

The following structures will not require a soils investigation to be submitted with the building permit application unless any of the conditions noted apply. Design of any foundations without a soils investigation shall meet all minimum design criteria and code minimums. When a soils investigation is required by the Building Official, it shall conform to the requirements of Chapter 18 of the California Building Code in effect at the time of submittal.

1. **New construction of single family dwellings (SFD) to include; detached garages, accessory structures, duplexes, detached guest houses, and additions including conditioned or unconditioned space or attached garages:**

▶ **A soils investigation is not required unless any of the following conditions apply:**

- The SFD is larger than 3,600 square feet.
- Any addition larger than 1000 square feet would require a specific site review by the building official.
- The project is an area that requires a Hillside Development Use Permit.
- The project is in an area of suspected placement of fill, slides, slumps or soil

creep.

- The project footprint is in a setback area of stream or creek.
- The area of the project is known for high water table or soil erosion area.
- The proposed foundation design does not match the existing structure foundation.
- The existing structure does not have an adequate foundation or the existing foundation shows signs of failure.
- The proposed new construction or addition does not exceed 2 stories.
- The proposed new construction or addition is within 50 ft of a known fault or branch fault line.

2. SFD remodels or tenant improvements (commercial) with no increase in square footage or no foundation repair or upgrade is proposed:

- ▶ **No soils investigation is required.**

3. SFD foundation replacement or repair:

- ▶ **A soils investigation is not required unless any of the following conditions apply:**

- The proposed replacement or foundation repair is designed with an assumed low expansive soil condition.
- The proposed foundation is not designed with an assumed soil bearing capacity that exceeds 1,500 lbs. per sq. ft.

4. Swimming pools (residential):

- ▶ **A soils investigation is not required unless any of the following conditions apply:**

- The proposed pool is in area that requires a hillside development review.
- The proposed pool is in any of the following suspected sites: landslide area, over fault line, or over fill.
- The proposed pool is not designed with assumed high expansive soils.
- The pool design does not meet the City of Calistoga's 85 pcf policy.
- The product listing of the proposed pool requires a soils investigation.

5. Retaining walls:

- ▶ **A soils investigation is not required unless any of the following conditions apply:**

- The proposed retaining wall has a surcharge load from above or supports a structure.
- The proposed retaining wall exceeds 5 feet in total height from bottom of footing to

top of fill.

- The retaining wall does not meet Class V soils per the CBC Table 1804.2.

General notes:

- The requirements noted above are general policy guidelines. The building official may require or waive a soils investigation for any project on a case by case review.
- A City of Calistoga building inspector upon inspection of footing excavation may require a soils investigation or a report by a licensed design professional to verify integrity of soils supporting the proposed structure.
- An available soils investigation from an adjacent area may be considered if the report demonstrates an investigation is not necessary for any of the conditions noted in Sections 1802.2.1 through 1802.2.6. Written authorization from the licensed professional who prepared the soils report is required to be submitted with any soils investigation on adjacent property.
- Although a project may qualify as a project not required to provide a soils report, it may be beneficial to have a soils report prepared. Information provided in the soils report may allow a design professional to design a less expensive and/or more appropriate foundation for the project.
- If the design professional involved bases the foundation design on information provided in a soils report, the soils report is required to be submitted with the building permit application even if the project would otherwise not be required to provide a soils report per this policy.