



**City of San Mateo**  
Building Division  
330 W 20<sup>th</sup> Ave  
San Mateo CA. 94403  
650-522-7172  
www.cityofsanmateo.org

## Policy for Soils & Geology Report

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The purpose of this guide is to clarify whether a soils and/or geology report is required or exempt when obtaining a building permit. Exemption from the foundation and soils investigation requirements shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be performed in any manner in violation of the requirements set forth in California Building Code (CBC), California Residential Code (CRC), and Health and Safety Code.

**Each project is unique, and additional requirements may be enforced as deemed appropriate by the Building Official.**

**Please contact the Building Division for any questions or additional information.**

- A. The following projects require a soils and/or geology report:
1. All new residential (single-family dwellings, duplexes, townhouses, and multifamily dwellings)
  2. All commercial and multifamily dwellings (new and addition)
  3. Basements (residential and commercial)
  4. Any deep foundations (residential and commercial)
  5. Push Piers, except for foundation upgrade for single-family dwellings
  6. Hillside that have a slope of 15% or steeper (residential and commercial)
- B. The following projects do not require a soils and/or geology report:
1. A site-specific study may be exempted for buildings that are classified in Risk Category I per CBC Table 1604.5 (i.e. agricultural facilities, temporary facilities, minor storage facilities).
  2. A site-specific study may be exempted for projects meeting all the following criteria:
    - a. Additions or alterations to single family or duplex residential buildings classified as R-3 occupancy where building are no more than two stories in height and have no basement
    - b. Building and foundation not on a hillside with a slope 15% or more
    - c. Property is not located in a Flood Zone
- C. When a site-specific foundation and soils investigation is exempted, the building and foundation systems shall comply with the following general guidelines (CBC and CRC):
1. The maximum allowable foundation pressure shall not exceed 1500 psf
  2. The minimum depth of footings shall be 18 inches below the undisturbed ground surface. The new foundation type shall be compatible with the existing foundation
  3. The maximum allowable lateral bearing pressure shall not exceed 100 psf/ft
  4. Allowable sliding resistance = 130 psf x footing soil contact area
  5. Allowable Frictional Resistance for Piers = 250 psf
  6. Specified compressive strength of concrete shall not be less than 2500 psi.

*Please note that where the soil classification, strength or compressibility, load-bearing value superior than specified in the building code and/or ground-water table elevation is in doubt, a soils report may be required.*