



INFORMATION SHEET

NO. S-05

DATE : 11/4/2025

CATEGORY : Structural

SUBJECT : **Geotechnical Report Requirements and Third-Party Review at Landslide Zones**

PURPOSE : The purpose of this Information Sheet is to clarify when the submittal of a geotechnical report is required based on the proposed work and to provide guidance for when third-party review may be required for proposed work in the vicinity of a landslide zone.

REFERENCE : San Francisco Building Code (SFBC), Current Edition
Minimum Design Loads and Associated Criteria for Buildings and Other Structures, American Society of Civil Engineers/Structural Engineering Institute (ASCE/SEI) 7, Current Edition
State of California Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) Seismic Hazard Zones Map for San Francisco, released November 17, 2000
Administrative Bulletin AB-082: Guidelines and Procedures for Structural, Geotechnical, and Seismic Hazard Engineering Design Review
Administrative Bulletin AB-083: Requirements and Guidelines for the Seismic Design of New Tall Buildings using Non-Prescriptive Seismic-Design Procedures
Administrative Bulletin AB-111: Guidelines for Preparation of Geotechnical and Earthquake Ground Motion Reports for Foundation Design and Construction of Tall Buildings

DISCUSSION:

A. The following proposed work requires the submittal of a geotechnical report:

1. New structures (with the exception of one-story storage or utility occupancies, including storage sheds and garages).

For projects involving new tall buildings, refer to Administrative Bulletin AB-083 and Administrative Bulletin AB-111.

2. Horizontal additions if the footprint area increases more than 50% of the existing footprint square footage.

3. Any grading, unless exempt per SFBC Section J104.3.
4. Fill slopes steeper than one unit vertical to two units horizontal (50-percent slope) per SFBC Section J107.6, or fills that deviate from the stipulated provisions in SFBC Section J107 Fills.
5. Any footings on or adjacent to slopes steeper than one unit vertical to three units horizontal without clearances as indicated per SFBC Section 1808.7 and Figure 1808.7.1.
6. The design soil lateral loads are less than the minimum design requirements specified in SFBC Section 1610 Soil Lateral Loads.
7. The design load bearing value used exceeds values stipulated for Class 5 soil materials in SFBC Table 1806.2 Presumptive Load-Bearing Values.
8. For structures assigned to Seismic Design Category D, E, or F, foundation walls and retaining walls supporting more than six feet of backfill height to determine the dynamic seismic lateral earth pressures due to design earthquake ground motions per SFBC Section 1803.5.12.
9. Special foundations including, but not limited to, deep foundations as specified in SFBC Section 1803.5.5 and 1810, base isolation and any design not covered by code. Piers supporting a fence, sign or isolated post are exempt from a geotechnical report for special foundations.
10. As required per SFBC, including but not limited to the following:
 - a) Expansive soil per SFBC Section 1803.5.3.
 - b) Drainage system as an alternative to the requirements per SFBC Section J109 Drainage and Terracing.
 - c) Ground-water table per SFBC Section 1803.5.4 to determine whether the existing ground-water table is above or within five feet below the elevation of the lowest floor level where such floor is located below the finished ground level adjacent to the foundation, unless waterproofing is provided in accordance with SFBC Section 1805.
 - d) Ground improvement, including soil mix grouting and chemical soil grouting.
 - e) Where shallow foundations will bear on controlled low-strength material (CLSM), a geotechnical investigation shall be conducted per SFBC Section 1803.5.9 Controlled low-strength material.
 - f) Where the classification, strength or compressibility of the soil is in doubt, such as soils in liquefaction zones for structures assigned to Seismic Design Category C, D, E or F, the building official shall require that a geotechnical investigation be conducted per SFBC 1803.5.2 and 1803.5.11.
 - g) Where geological investigation is deemed necessary per SFBC Section 1803 Geotechnical Investigations.
11. Permit scope subject to mandatory structural advisory committee review under SFBC Section 106A.4.1.2 Edgehill Mountain Slope Protection Area and Section 106A.4.1.3 Northwest Mt. Sutro Slope Protection Area.

12. All structures utilizing Modal Response Spectrum Analysis in accordance with ASCE 7 Section 12.9.1 Modal Response Spectrum Analysis.

B. The following are submittal requirements for geotechnical reports:

1. Geotechnical reports shall be prepared in accordance with SFBC Section 1803.2 through Section 1803.6 and Section J104.3.
2. Civil engineers experienced in geotechnical engineering are authorized to practice geotechnical engineering. This includes preparing or reviewing geotechnical reports. Engineers shall perform services only in the areas of their competence.
3. Geotechnical reports shall be submitted along with the permit application and drawings for plan review. An electronic copy of the final geotechnical report shall be made available to the plan reviewer for DBI and state records. Geotechnical reports or additional geotechnical information may be requested by the plan reviewer during review of the project.
4. In addition to the geotechnical report, provide a letter signed and sealed by the geotechnical consultant, who is a licensed civil or geotechnical engineer, stating that they have reviewed and approved the final structural plans, drawings, and calculations if applicable. Include the letter in the permit drawings.

C. In addition to submittal of a geotechnical report, third-party review may be required in general accordance with Administrative Bulletin AB-082:

1. Where any of the following work is proposed at a property that lies within, or in the immediate vicinity of, the "Earthquake-Induced Landslide" area on the state of California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) Seismic Hazard Zones Map for San Francisco, released November 17, 2000, or there is a history of landslides at the subject project site or in the immediate vicinity. "Immediate vicinity" shall mean any property tangent to the subject project site.
 - a. New buildings or structures greater than 1,000 square feet.
 - b. Additions to existing buildings or structures creating 1,000 square feet of total aggregate new floor area, cumulative within the last three years.
 - c. Excavation or fill of over 50 cubic yards of earth materials.
 - d. Any other construction activity that, in the opinion of the Building Official, may have a substantial impact on the slope stability of any property.



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Date

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