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Planning, Building & Environmental Services

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Napa County Building Division Policy for Geotechnical Reports

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to clarify when a geotechnical (soils investigation) report is required as part of a building permit application. The requirements below are intended as general policy guidelines. The Building Official may still require or grant relief for a soils investigation report for any project within the jurisdiction.

GENERAL

Geotechnical reports submitted for support of permits should reflect the current site conditions and proposed project. An addendum geotechnical report or updated geotechnical report may be required if site conditions differ or proposed project elements have changed relative to those addressed in the original geotechnical report. Geotechnical reports are considered valid for ten (10) years unless the geotechnical consultant identifies a shorter expiration date. In all cases, if a soils report has been previously performed for the parcel, a copy of this report must be included in the application along with an update letter from a qualified California licensed engineer stating that no changes to the site conditions have occurred.

WHERE REQUIRED

A soils investigation shall be required for all new and replacement structures as well as additions and changes of occupancy within the unincorporated portions of Napa County with the following exceptions:

Exceptions:

1. Accessory structures that meet all of the following requirements:
 - a. Type V light frame construction or masonry walls supported by not less than 24" deep continuous perimeter foundation.
 - b. Single story no more than 15ft in height (to top of roof).
 - c. A roof area less than 600 sqft. (20x30).
 - d. Not intended for permanent or incidental human occupancy.
2. Structures other than platforms or retaining walls with no interior space and under 15ft in height: Fences, gates, flag poles, monument signs, etc.
3. Trash enclosures and shade structures open on at least 3 sides & less than 400 sqft in U.S.G.S. mapped areas where soil is known to be stable.
4. Swimming pools which are designed with the assumption of expansive soil.
5. Additions to single family dwelling (R-3) that are less than 25% of the original total sqft in U.S.G.S. mapped areas where soil is known to be stable, and there is no evidence of structural failure to the existing foundation.

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