



Building Code: Soil & Foundation Guidelines

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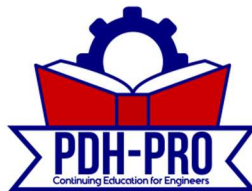
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CHAPTER 18

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.

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 1802.6. Where required by the building official, the classification and investigation of the soil shall be made by a registered design professional.

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.

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 D. Where a structure is determined to be in Seismic Design Category D 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.

1802.2.8 Building height. For all buildings that are more than three stories or 40 feet (12 192 mm) in height above the grade plane, the building official shall request soil tests.

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. There shall be at least one exploratory boring to rock or to an adequate depth below the load-bearing strata for every 2,500 square feet (233 m²) of built-over area, and such additional tests as the code official requires.

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 soil borings are 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.

SECTION 1803 EXCAVATION, GRADING AND FILL

1803.1 Excavations near footings or foundations. Excavations for any purpose shall not remove lateral support from any footing or foundation without first underpinning or protecting the footing or foundation against settlement or lateral translation.

1803.2 Placement of backfill. The excavation outside the foundation shall be backfilled with soil that is free of organic material, construction debris, cobbles and boulders or a controlled low-strength material (CLSM). The backfill shall be placed in lifts and compacted, in a manner that does not damage the foundation or the waterproofing or damp proofing material.

Exception: Controlled low-strength material need not be compacted.

1803.3 Site grading. The ground immediately adjacent to the foundation shall be sloped away from the building at a slope of not less than one unit vertical in 20 units horizontal (5-percent slope) for a minimum distance of 10 feet (3048 mm) measured perpendicular to the face of the wall. If physical obstructions or lot lines prohibit 10 feet (3048 mm) of horizontal distance, a 5-percent slope shall be provided to an approved alternative method of diverting water away from the foundation. Swales used for this purpose shall be sloped a minimum of 2 percent where located within 10 feet (3048 mm) of the building foundation. Impervious surfaces within 10 feet (3048 mm) of the building foundation shall be sloped a minimum of 2 percent away from the building.

Exception: Where climatic or soil conditions warrant, the slope of the ground away from the building foundation is permitted to be reduced to not less than one unit vertical in 48 units horizontal (2-percent slope).



The procedure used to establish the final ground level adjacent to the foundation shall account for additional settlement of the backfill.

1803.4 Grading and fill in flood hazard areas. In flood hazard areas established in Section 1612.3, grading and/or fill shall not be approved:

1. Unless such fill is placed, compacted and sloped to minimize shifting, slumping and erosion during the rise and fall of flood water and, as applicable, wave action.
2. In floodways, unless it has been demonstrated through hydrologic and hydraulic analyses performed by a registered design professional in accordance with standard engineering practice that the proposed grading or fill, or both, will not result in any increase in flood levels during the occurrence of the design flood.
3. In flood hazard areas subject to high-velocity wave action unless such fill is conducted and/or placed to avoid diversion of water and waves toward any building or structure.
4. Where design flood elevations are specified but floodways have not been designated, unless it has been demonstrated that the cumulative effect of the proposed flood hazard area encroachment, when combined with all other existing and anticipated flood hazard area encroachment, will not increase the design flood elevation more than 1 foot (305 mm) at any point.

1803.5 Compacted fill material. Where footings will bear on compacted fill material, the compacted fill shall comply with the provisions of an approved report, which shall contain the following:

1. Specifications for the preparation of the site prior to placement of compacted fill material.
2. Specifications for material to be used as compacted fill.
3. Test method to be used to determine the maximum dry density and optimum moisture content of the material to be used as compacted fill.
4. Maximum allowable thickness of each lift of compacted fill material.
5. Field test method for determining the in-place dry density of the compacted fill.
6. Minimum acceptable in-place dry density expressed as a percentage of the maximum dry density determined in accordance with Item 3.
7. Number and frequency of field tests required to determine compliance with Item 6.

Exception: Compacted fill material less than 12 inches (305 mm) in depth need not comply with an approved report, provided it has been compacted to a minimum of 90 percent Modified Proctor in accordance with ASTM D 1557. The compaction shall be verified by a qualified inspector approved by the building official.

1803.6 Controlled low-strength material (CLSM). Where footings will bear on controlled low-strength material (CLSM), the CLSM shall comply with the provisions of an approved report, which shall contain the following:

1. Specifications for the preparation of the site prior to placement of the CLSM.
2. Specifications for the CLSM.
3. Laboratory or field test method(s) to be used to determine the compressive strength or bearing capacity of the CLSM.
4. Test methods for determining the acceptance of the CLSM in the field.
5. Number and frequency of field tests required to determine compliance with Item 4.

SECTION 1804

ALLOWABLE LOAD-BEARING VALUES OF SOILS

1804.1 Design. The presumptive load-bearing values provided in Table 1804.2 shall be used with the allowable stress design load combinations specified in Section 1605.3.

1804.2 Presumptive load-bearing values. The maximum allowable foundation pressure, lateral pressure or lateral sliding-resistance values for supporting soils near the surface shall not exceed the values specified in Table 1804.2 unless data to substantiate the use of a higher value are submitted and approved.

Presumptive load-bearing values shall apply to materials with similar physical characteristics and dispositions.

Mud, organic silt, organic clays, peat or unprepared fill shall not be assumed to have a presumptive load-bearing capacity unless data to substantiate the use of such a value are submitted.

Exception: A presumptive load-bearing capacity is permitted to be used where the building official deems the load-bearing capacity of mud, organic silt or unprepared fill is adequate for the support of lightweight and temporary structures.

1804.3 Lateral sliding resistance. The resistance of structural walls to lateral sliding shall be calculated by combining the values derived from the lateral bearing and the lateral sliding resistance shown in Table 1804.2 unless data to substantiate the use of higher values are submitted for approval.

For clay, sandy clay, silty clay, and clayey silt, in no case shall the lateral sliding resistance exceed one-half the dead load.

1804.3.1 Increases in allowable lateral sliding resistance. The resistance values derived from the table are permitted to be increased by the tabular value for each additional foot (305 mm) of depth to a maximum of 15 times the tabular value.

Isolated poles for uses such as flagpoles or signs and poles used to support buildings that are not adversely affected by a 0.5-inch (12.7 mm) motion at the ground surface due to short-term lateral loads are permitted to be designed using lateral-bearing values equal to two times the tabular values.



TABLE 1804.2
ALLOWABLE FOUNDATION AND LATERAL PRESSURE

CLASS OF MATERIALS	ALLOWABLE FOUNDATION PRESSURE (psf) ^d	LATERAL BEARING (psf/f below natural grade) ^d	LATERAL SLIDING	
			Coefficient of friction ^a	Resistance (psf) ^b
1. Crystalline bedrock	12,000	1,200	0.70	—
2. Sedimentary and foliated rock	4,000	400	0.35	—
3. Sandy gravel and/or gravel (GW and GP)	3,000	200	0.35	—
4. Sand, silty sand, clayey sand, silty gravel and clayey gravel (SW, SP, SM, SC, GM and GC)	2,000	150	0.25	—
5. Clay, sandy clay, silty clay, clayey silt, silt and sandy silt (CL, ML, MH and CH)	1,500 ^c	100	—	130

For SI: 1 pound per square foot = 0.0479 kPa, 1 pound per square foot per foot = 0.157 kPa/m.

a. Coefficient to be multiplied by the dead load.

b. Lateral sliding resistance value to be multiplied by the contact area, as limited by Section 1804.3.

c. Where the building official determines that in-place soils with an allowable bearing capacity of less than 1,500 psf are likely to be present at the site, the allowable bearing capacity shall be determined by a soils investigation.

d. An increase of one-third is permitted when using the alternate load combinations in Section 1605.3.2 that include wind or earthquake loads.

SECTION 1805 FOOTINGS AND FOUNDATIONS

1805.1 General. Footings and foundations shall be designed and constructed in accordance with Sections 1805.1 through 1805.9. Footings and foundations shall be built on undisturbed soil, compacted fill material or CLSM. Compacted fill material shall be placed in accordance with Section 1803.5. CLSM shall be placed in accordance with Section 1803.6.

The top surface of footings shall be level. The bottom surface of footings is permitted to have a slope not exceeding one unit vertical in 10 units horizontal (10-percent slope). Footings shall be stepped where it is necessary to change the elevation of the top surface of the footing or where the surface of the ground slopes more than one unit vertical in 10 units horizontal (10-percent slope).

1805.2 Depth of footings. The minimum depth of footings below the undisturbed ground surface shall be 12 inches (305 mm). Where applicable, the depth of footings shall also conform to Sections 1805.2.1 through 1805.2.3.

1805.2.1 Frost protection. Except where otherwise protected from frost, foundation walls, piers and other permanent supports of buildings and structures shall be protected by one or more of the following methods:

1. Extending below the frost line of the locality.
2. Constructing in accordance with ASCE 32; or
3. Erecting on solid rock.

Exception: Free-standing buildings meeting all of the following conditions shall not be required to be protected:

1. Classified in Occupancy Category I, in accordance with Section 1604.5;
2. Area of 600 square feet (56 m²) or less for light-frame construction or 400 square feet (37 m²) or less for other than light-frame construction; and

3. Eave height of 10 feet (3048 mm) or less.

Footings shall not bear on frozen soil unless such frozen condition is of a permanent character.

1805.2.2 Isolated footings. Footings on granular soil shall be so located that the line drawn between the lower edges of adjoining footings shall not have a slope steeper than 30 degrees (0.52 rad) with the horizontal, unless the material supporting the higher footing is braced or retained or otherwise laterally supported in an approved manner or a greater slope has been properly established by engineering analysis.

1805.2.3 Shifting or moving soils. Where it is known that the shallow subsoils are of a shifting or moving character, footings shall be carried to a sufficient depth to ensure stability.

1805.3 Footings on or adjacent to slopes. The placement of buildings and structures on or adjacent to slopes steeper than one unit vertical in three units horizontal (33.3-percent slope) shall conform to Sections 1805.3.1 through 1805.3.5.

1805.3.1 Building clearance from ascending slopes. In general, buildings below slopes shall be set a sufficient distance from the slope to provide protection from slope drainage, erosion and shallow failures. Except as provided for in Section 1805.3.5 and Figure 1805.3.1, the following criteria will be assumed to provide this protection. Where the existing slope is steeper than one unit vertical in one-unit horizontal (100-percent slope), the toe of the slope shall be assumed to be at the intersection of a horizontal plane drawn from the top of the foundation and a plane drawn tangent to the slope at an angle of 45 degrees (0.79 rad) to the horizontal. Where a retaining wall is constructed at the toe of the slope, the height of the slope shall be measured from the top of the wall to the top of the slope.

1805.3.2 Footing setback from descending slope surface. Footings on or adjacent to slope surfaces shall be founded in firm material with an embedment and set back

from the slope surface sufficient to provide vertical and lateral support for the footing without detrimental settlement. Except as provided for in Section 1805.3.5 and Figure 1805.3.1, the following setback is deemed adequate to meet the criteria. Where the slope is steeper than 1-unit vertical in 1 unit horizontal (100-percent slope), the required setback shall be measured from an imaginary plane 45 degrees (0.79 rad) to the horizontal, projected upward from the toe of the slope.

1805.3.3 Pools. The setback between pools regulated by this code and slopes shall be equal to one-half the building footing setback distance required by this section. That portion of the pool wall within a horizontal distance of 7 feet (2134 mm) from the top of the slope shall be capable of supporting the water in the pool without soil support.

1805.3.4 Foundation elevation. On graded sites, the top of any exterior foundation shall extend above the elevation of the street gutter at point of discharge or the inlet of an approved drainage device a minimum of 12 inches (305 mm) plus 2 percent. Alternate elevations are permitted subject to the approval of the building official, provided it can be demonstrated that required drainage to the point of discharge and away from the structure is provided at all locations on the site.

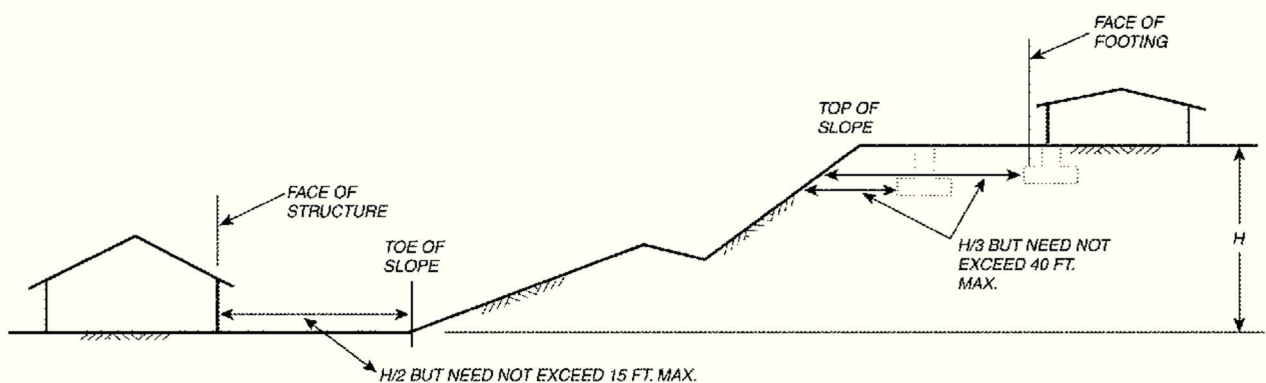
1805.3.5 Alternate setback and clearance. Alternate setbacks and clearances are permitted, subject to the approval of the building official. The building official is permitted to require an investigation and recommendation of a registered design professional to demonstrate that the intent of this section has been satisfied. Such an investigation shall include consideration of material, height of slope, slope gradient, load intensity and erosion characteristics of slope material.

1805.4 Footings. Footings shall be designed and constructed in accordance with Sections 1805.4.1 through 1805.4.6.

1805.4.1 Design. Footings shall be so designed that the allowable bearing capacity of the soil is not exceeded, and that differential settlement is minimized. The minimum width of footings shall be 12 inches (305 mm).

Footings in areas with expansive soils shall be designed in accordance with the provisions of Section 1805.8.

1805.4.1.1 Design loads. Footings shall be designed for the most unfavorable effects due to the combinations of loads specified in Section 1605.2 or 1605.3. The dead load is permitted to include the weight of foundations, footings and overlying fill. Reduced live loads, as specified in Sections 1607.9 and 1607.11, are permitted to be used in the design of footings.



For SI: 1 foot = 304.8 mm.

FIGURE 1805.3.1
FOUNDATION CLEARANCES FROM SLOPES

TABLE 1805.4.2
FOOTINGS SUPPORTING WALLS OF LIGHT-FRAME CONSTRUCTION^{a, b, c, d, e}

NUMBER OF FLOORS SUPPORTED BY THE FOOTING ^f	WIDTH OF FOOTING (inches)		
1	12		
2	15		
3	18		

For SI: 1 inch = 25.4 mm, 1 foot = 304.8 mm.

- Depth of footings shall be in accordance with Section 1805.2.
- The ground under the floor is permitted to be excavated to the elevation of the top of the footing.
- Interior-stud-bearing walls are permitted to be supported by isolated footings. The footing width and length shall be twice the width shown in this table, and footings shall be spaced not more than 6 feet on center.
- See Section 1908 for additional requirements for footings of structures assigned to Seismic Design Category C, D, E or F.
- For thickness of foundation walls, see Section 1805.5.
- Footings are permitted to support a roof in addition to the stipulated number of floors. Footings supporting roof only shall be as required for supporting one floor.
- Plain concrete footings for Group R-3 occupancies are permitted to be 6 inches thick.



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