
GEOLOGIC AND GEOTECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR REBUILDING IN THE PALISADES FIRE AREA

I. INTRODUCTION

To streamline and expedite the rebuilding process for structures that were destroyed or significantly damaged by the wildfire in 2025, the Mayor issued Emergency Executive Order No. 1 (EEO1), which was revised on March 18, 2025. This Information Bulletin outlines the LADBS requirements for Eligible Projects relative to soil and geological issues. Eligible Projects are defined in the Mayor's Emergency Executive Order.

II. REQUIRED REPORTS

The LADBS has prepared a map, titled "Palisades Geohazard Risk Assessment Zones" (PGRAZ), which shows the approximate location of two zones that will require combined Geology and Soils reports. The map and the identified addresses can be found [here \(PGRAZ\)](#). The PGRAZ zones are identified as geologically sensitive areas. Orange zones include sites on or next to steep slopes (in general, steeper than 2h:1v) or potential landslide areas. Yellow zones include sites at the bottom of steep slopes that are prone to be affected by mudslide debris. This document has been prepared as a quick reference to use in determining if a geology and soils report will be required. The Department suggests that home owners contact their geotechnical consultant, for properties not on the list, but are near slopes that they are concerned with.

In order to reduce costs, neighboring properties may jointly commission one geotechnical firm to provide reports that cover multiple properties.

Non-Eligible Projects shall be considered new development and will not qualify for the streamlining guidelines in this information bulletin. All relevant code provisions, including Grading Pre-inspections, will be applicable.

A. Orange and Yellow Areas Within the PGRAZ

Combined Geology and Soils reports are required and shall be prepared in accordance with the guidelines presented in [Information Bulletin P/BC 2024-113](#).

Previous Remedial Repairs (including foundation or slope improvements) may remain if the geotechnical consultants determine there is no potential instability.

B. Areas Not Within the Orange and Yellow PGRAZ

Areas not within the PGRAZ are relatively flat and will typically not require combined Geology and Soils reports. However, some exemptions will apply that may require a Soils only report. If an existing shallow foundation is removed during the demolition process, a grading permit for removal and recompaction (R&R) is required.

A soils report will be required for excavations deeper than 5 feet and/or where lateral support from an adjacent property, structure or public way is removed.

Inspection of the subgrade prior to placing the compacted fill (i.e., the bottom inspection) can be self-certified by the soils engineer. The compaction report can also be self-certified by the soils engineer and be submitted to the LADBS Grading Division for the record.

C. Existing Reports

Eligible Projects with an existing report that was prepared for a project with a similar scope of work, may be used again for the rebuild, provided there is an approval letter dated within 10 years of the Mayor's EEO1. However, the reports approved prior to the 2019 California Building Code will need to be updated for seismic design parameters, including seismic slope stability analyses and seismic lateral earth pressures. Existing reports for adjacent or nearby sites may be used to reduce new exploration if the area is relatively comparable geologically. Consultants shall include a statement that they have reviewed, concur and assume responsibility for the data in a previously approved report that was completed by others.

III. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following provides comments on a few specific code sections that may impact the reconstruction of Eligible Projects.

7005.9 Nonconforming Sites

Rebuilds will not be considered "new buildings" so the whole site need not be in full compliance with the LABC.

7006.8 Conformance with Zoning Regulations

The Mayor's Emergency Executive Order No. 1 waives zoning regulations for Eligible Projects.

7011.6 Old Fills

This code section requires the project soils engineer to investigate fills older than April 25, 1963. Testing the old fill will not be required provided the consultants determine that the fill is suitable for the proposed reconstruction. It will be up to the project soils engineer to assess if a similar foundation can be used for rebuilding or not. In areas where the soil engineer anticipates that significant settlement may still occur, mat foundations can be considered instead of deep piles.

Requirements for grading plans submitted to the Department are provided in Information Bulletin P/BC 2023-133.

IV. CALIFORNIA SEISMIC HAZARD ZONES

Seismic hazard evaluations (i.e., earthquake induced slope stability, liquefaction analysis, or a fault investigation) will be required for projects that are not exempt. The Department's Information Bulletin P/BC 2023-044 explains which projects are exempt. If a site already has an approved report with seismic hazard evaluations, a new report may not be necessary.

V. EXISTING FOUNDATIONS

Reusing the existing slab and foundation is permitted as long as a California-licensed Professional Structural Engineer or Architect evaluates the foundation system and affirms that it is in satisfactory condition. Documentation, which may include observations and tests of the foundation system, must be submitted to LADBS for review and approval. Additional soil or geotechnical investigations may be necessary in certain geological regions to assess the feasibility of reusing the foundation system.

VI. GRADING PRE-INSPECTION (GPI) REPORTS

A GPI will not be required unless otherwise determined by LADBS, or where lateral support of existing structures, private property or public way is removed during construction and/or excavation.