

CONTRACTORS NEWSFLASH

Geotechnical Investigation Reports and Certification

January 10, 2024

Effective with adoption of the 2023 Florida Building Codes which went into effect at 12:00 a.m., December 31, 2023, the Palm Coast Building Division is requiring geotechnical investigation reports to be submitted with applications for building permit for new residential construction including one- and two-family dwellings, townhouses, and multi-family (three or more dwelling units).

PROCEDURAL OPTION AVAILABLE TO CONTRACTORS

To assist transition to this new policy and understanding the logistics involved with the timing of lot clearing and completion and submittal of geotechnical investigation reports, contractors may apply for building permits without submittal of the geotechnical report. This is intended to allow issuance of the building permit so that lot clearing can begin which may be necessary for the geotechnical engineer to access the foundation area to complete the subsurface investigation.

If the contractor selects this option, the contractor must upload a document on company letterhead that states: DEFERRED SUBMITTAL OF THE GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION REPORT IS REQUESTED. This document must be uploaded to the permit portal using the DEFERRED SUBMITTAL document type. The file name must identify the type of deferred submittal - Geotechnical Deferred Submittal.

When the contractor chooses the deferred submittal option, the Building Division will place an inspection hold on the permit for the 1st Rough Plumbing Underground, footing and/or monolithic foundation inspections until the following is submitted as a Plan Revision / Correction:

1. The completed geotechnical investigation report. The completed geotechnical investigation report. Be advised, the report must be submitted and approved by the Building Division before starting excavation and placement of fill work. Allow a minimum of 5 business days for review - more time if the review results in corrections to the report.
2. The geotechnical engineer's certification letter (see below).

GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION REPORTS MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- Reports must be in accordance with the 2023 Florida Building Code-Building Section 1803.2. Reports to be conducted per Sections 1803.3 through 1803.5. Completed reports shall comply with the reporting requirements in Section 1803.6.

Exception: The soil load-bearing value per Section 1803.6 No. 5 is not required to be determined by the Geotechnical Engineer at their discretion. If the soil load-bearing value is not provided in the report, the registered design professional for the design of the home must provide

the presumptive soil load-bearing value per Florida Building Code-Residential Table R401.4.1 on the foundation plan and reference the Section R401.4.1 as the source of the assumed soil load-bearing value.

- Reports must be signed and sealed by a Florida licensed professional engineer.
- Reports must be a separate document submittal – reports written on or otherwise added to foundation plans will not be accepted
- If transmitted to the Palm Coast Building Division electronically, reports must bear a digital or electronic signature and seal pursuant to Florida Statute 471.025 and Florida Administrative Code 61G15-23.001 and 61G15-23.004 through 61G15-23.005.
- If transmitted to the Palm Coast Building Division in paper format, reports must bear an ink, raised or embossed seal pursuant to Florida Statute 471.025 and Florida Administrative Code 61G15-23.001 through 61G15-23.003. Reports must be original with original engineer's signature and seal.
- Reports must be specific to the lot for which the building permit is sought and shall contain the property legal description AND physical site address. The physical site address by itself in lieu of the legal description is also acceptable.

IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE REPORT INFORMATION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLORIDA BUILDING CODE SECTION 1803.5.8, WHERE SHALLOW FOUNDATIONS WILL BEAR ON COMPACTED FILL MATERIAL MORE THAN 12 INCHES IN DEPTH, GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION REPORTS SHALL INCLUDE ALL OF 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 methods 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.
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.

WHERE COMPACTED FILL MATERIALS EXCEED 12 INCHES IN DEPTH, THE GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER SHALL PROVIDE A SITE INSPECTION REPORT AND ENGINEERING CERTIFICATION AFTER THE BUILDING PERMIT IS ISSUED, AFTER SITE PREPARATION AND SOIL MITIGATION WORK IS COMPLETED, BUT PRIOR TO THE FIRST INSPECTION (1ST ROUGH PLUMBING UNDERGROUND) INDICATING THE FOLLOWING:

1. The site was prepared in accordance with the report and Item No. 1 above and inspected and approved by the geotechnical engineer.

2. Placement of compacted fill was performed in accordance with Item No. 4 above and confirmed by the geotechnical engineer.

3. Field tests (compaction tests) were taken in accordance with No. 3 above at the frequency and locations per No. 7 above.

GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER SITE INSPECTION REPORTS AND CERTIFICATION

- Geotechnical site inspection reports transmitted to the Palm Coast Building Division electronically, must bear a digital or electronic signature and seal pursuant to Florida Statute 471.025 and Florida Administrative Code 61G15-23.001 and 61G15-23.004 through 61G15-23.005.

- Geotechnical site inspection reports transmitted to the Palm Coast Building Division in paper format must bear an ink, raised or embossed seal pursuant to Florida Statute 471.025 and Florida Administrative Code 61G15-23.001 through 61G15-23.003. Reports must be original with original engineer's signature and seal.

- Copies of all compaction test reports confirming required compaction density has been achieved in all tested areas shall be submitted with geotechnical site inspection reports.

- Geotechnical site inspection reports shall include a certification statement by the geotechnical engineer in substantial conformance with language contained in Florida Administrative Code 61G15-011 (see also 61G15-29.001).

RELATED INFORMATION

- Foundation plans prepared for one- and two-family dwellings, townhouses, and multi-family (three or more dwelling units) construction shall reference the geotechnical investigation report number.
- Allow five (5) business days for Building Division review of geotechnical site inspection reports prior to scheduling the first inspection (plumbing underground).
- Upon approval of the geotechnical site inspection reports by the Palm Coast Building Division, inspection holds will be removed allowing scheduling of the 1st Rough Plumbing Underground and other inspections

PLEASE PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION TO YOUR FOUNDATION ENGINEER, STRUCTURAL ENGINEER AND GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER.

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to Patrick Buckley, Chief Building Official at pbuckley@palmcoastgov.com or 386-986-3786.