

CITY OF LOS ALTOS
Community Development
Building Division

Telephone No. (650) 947-2752 / Inspection Line (650) 947-2754



SUBJECT: FOUNDATION INSPECTION

TO: CONTRACTORS AND HOMEOWNERS

1. PRE-CONSTRUCTION INFORMATION AND MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS:

1. IMPORTANT NOTICE: INSPECTION REQUESTS AND CANCELLATIONS

To schedule an inspection any time of day, call (650) 947-2754 and press option (2). To check the time of a scheduled inspection (AM or PM only), press option (3). To cancel a scheduled inspection, press option (4). When scheduling an inspection provide all requested information. Inspections **WILL NOT** be scheduled if the permit number or address are not given. If job is **NOT READY** for a scheduled inspection, cancellation is required not later than 9:00 AM the day of the scheduled inspection. A \$30.00 re-inspection fee will be charged for failure to cancel.

2. COMBINATION INSPECTIONS:

The City of Los Altos requires inspections of rough frame, plumbing, electrical and mechanical be done simultaneously.

3. This pre-inspection guideline is based on the California Building and Los Altos Municipal Code requirements applicable to most foundation inspections. Not all code requirements in this guide will apply to your particular project nor is this intended to be a complete list. It is the homeowners and contractors responsibility to comply with all applicable codes, laws and City ordinances.

4. Los Altos City business licenses are required by all Contractors and Sub-Contractors. Licenses are to be kept in contractor's vehicle at all times, and are to be produced to any city inspector or police officer upon request.

5. Building permit, job inspection approval card and "Job Copy" of plans and current correction notices are required at every inspection. A copy of the building permit is to be kept at the job site for inspection purposes throughout the duration of construction or **WORK MAY BE HALTED** by any City representative.

6. No work may be installed in the public right-of-way without an encroachment permit or as described in the approved plans.
7. Engineering Department must be notified at least (1) working day prior to beginning any work in the public right-of-way.
8. Travel lanes of streets cannot be blocked without notifying the Los Altos Police Communications (650) 947-2834 at least 24 hours prior to blocking of a street or portion thereof.
9. A “City Approved” Compaction Report shall be on site at the time of footing/foundation inspection at all building sites where an existing house has been removed. Submit two (2) copies of report for City approval prior to calling for the Foundation Inspection.

2. REQUIREMENTS FOR INSPECTION OF EXCAVATION AND FOUNDATION:

1. If “Job Copy” plans do not address actual on-site conditions: i.e. maintaining 6” clearance from existing grade to top of foundation (CBC 1806.1), or a site drainage problem; a foundation revision raising the top of the foundation or a grading and drainage plan must be submitted to the Building Division for approval. A possible revision alternative is to raise the foundation top and bolt a P.T. ledger to the foundation. Floor joist can then be hanger installed to the ledger.
2. If a newly discovered abandoned septic tank or soft fill area conflicts with the foundation plan or pier placement, remediation by the project architect or engineer is required. A field revision must then be submitted to the Building Division for approval.
3. New residences and major remodeling/foundation projects require certificates verifying setbacks and finished floor levels, per plans, by a registered civil engineer of record. Submit two (2) copies to Los Altos Building Department before calling for a foundation inspection. Job stamped copy must be posted on job at:
 - 1) Foundation pre-pour inspection to verify building setbacks from property lines, building dimensions and finished floor elevations. Specific figures per job-approved set of plans must be provided in the certificate.
 - 2) At roof nail to verify compliance with daylight plane, average height and total height based on the jobsite approved plans and specifications.
 - 3) At final inspection to verify grading and drainage per City approved plans.

4. Partial inspections are not acceptable unless unavoidably necessary and pre-arranged with the Building Division.
5. Splitting work into phases is not permitted unless prearranged with the Building Official prior to permit issuance and split permit fees paid.
6. Gas and electric meters shall be removed by PG & E at all major remodeling or addition projects where occupants move out during construction. Approved temporary power poles shall be provided for construction electricity. “Jerry-rigging” temporary non-GFI and unprotected wiring and dangling hot wires during demolition are strictly forbidden. Jobs will be shut down for unsafe electrical conditions.
7. Refer to “Contractor/Owner Mandatory Measures” handout concerning graveling of access; on site parking; vehicle wash area; on site wash pit; construction material storage; control of excavation soil & debris containment, etc. Compliance to these measures is required.
8. Underground electrical service is required if electrical service is relocated more than 4 feet or as noted per plans. Therefore, due to the long delay in obtaining underground electrical service, applications to PG&E should be made at the commencement of construction.
9. Note that at the Final Inspection, finish soil grade shall be no less than 6” below top foundation with a 2% slope to a minimum of 5 feet out from the new foundation perimeter. (CBC 1806.1 & 1806.5.5 (Second Sentence))
10. Building site access must be resistant to trafficking dirt, debris and mud into public roads. If necessary, as in new residential construction, ¾” gravel must be provided at site access and off street construction parking area. See Calif. NPS & URPPP for more detailed requirements.
11. If dirt, mud, concrete or other construction material is deposited in the street, it must be immediately swept up. Do not wash it into the gutter and into the run-off drains. REFER TO THE NPS SHEET IN THE JOB APPROVED SET OF PLANS FOR MORE INFORMATION. Failure to respond to the NPS requirements may incur legal implication.
12. Provisions shall be made for control of drainage and surface water around building sites during construction to prevent mud and dirt-laden water from tracking into street.
13. Clearly identify all property lines prior to excavation and footing and/or foundation forms/steel inspection. Dimensions will be verified. See #2.3 for certification requirements on new homes and major foundation remodeling.
14. Excavation shall be deep enough to allow for a minimum of 18” clearance under the floor joists and 12” under girders to soil. (CBC 2306.3)

15. Basement excavation near adjacent property lines and involving neighboring structures must be given approved special engineering considerations to retain dirt banks from caving-in during construction and after back-fill. (CBC 3301.2)
16. Stumps, roots, loose dirt, water and debris shall be removed from footing trenches prior to pre-pour inspection. (CBC 3302)
17. Footings shall be excavated to a minimum depth of 12" below undisturbed soil for single-story buildings and 18" for two-story. (CBC Table 18-1-c)
18. All footing and pier excavations shall be the specified dimensions at the bottom.
19. Pre-made tapered pier block footings are not allowed. Pier footings shall be poured-in-place with a metal post base installed at time of concrete placement.
20. Do not excavate below the bottom of existing footings within the 45 degree angle of repose. Trenches for piping or drainage paralleling a footing shall not be deeper than the bottom of the footing. If such piping or drainage must be deeper, it must be outside an angle of 45 degrees downward from the bottom of the footing. (CPC 313.3)
21. All piping passing through footings, foundations or slabs shall be protected with an approved pipe sleeve to prevent damage by expansion. No piping shall be directly embedded within a concrete wall or footing without design considerations. (CPC 313.2)
22. All reinforcing steel shall be protected by a minimum of 3" of concrete when cast against and permanently exposed to earth and, reinforcing steel shall be maintained free of mud, oil, rust or other coatings that will decrease the concrete/steel bond. (CBC 1907.7.1)
23. Both footing and foundation reinforcing steel shall be accurately placed and supported to prevent displacement during concrete pour. (CBC 1907.5.1)
24. Nominal thickness of foundation wall shall not be less than specified on plans nor less than 6" for one story or 8" for two story. (CBC 18-1-c)
25. All new foundation areas must have at least on 18" x 24" **UNOBSTRUCTED** crawl access through an existing foundation or an 18" x 24" thru-the floor access to the new area. (CBC 2306.3)
26. Forms shall be braced and tied together to maintain position and shape when stressed by concrete placement. (CBC 1906.1.3)
27. New footings and foundation shall be anchored to existing footings and foundations with reinforcing steel embedded into pre-existing concrete not less than 6". Holes drilled to receive reinforcing steel shall be blown clean and partially filled with an approved epoxy before inserting steel.

28. No. 5 or smaller reinforcing steel in foundations NOT permanently exposed to earth but exposed to weather, shall be protected by a minimum of 1-1/2" of concrete and increased to 2" of concrete for #6 through #18 bar. For #11 and smaller bar NOT exposed to weather or ground, concrete protection shall not be less than 3/4". (CBC 1907.7.1)
29. If a new electrical service is to be installed, a #4 concrete encased reinforcing bar 20' long or a #4 copper wire 20' long and extending above the foundation top, must be tied to other reinforcing steel within 3" of the bottom and sides of footing.
30. Hold-downs, HPA straps, post anchors or other similar hardware, excepting 5/8" mudsill anchor bolts unless otherwise specifically required for special spacing, shall be preset at the required location and embedment prior to the foundation inspection.
31. Foundation mudsill 5/8" anchor bolts shall be located within 12" of the ends of mudsills and secured with a 2" x 2" x 3/16" square washer and nut. Holes bored in mudsills shall not be larger than 1/8" the diameter of the anchor bolt. (CBC 1806.6)
32. Basement retaining walls shall have a listed membrane system installed below finish grade as specified per plans. (CBC 1402.4)
33. After concrete is placed and set, all wood used in formwork shall be removed from the ground.

34. **MANDATORY:**

Non-point Source Pollution Control Program (NPS): Los Altos Municipal Code Section 5-5.639 Storm Drains; threatened discharges.

- a. At construction site: store both wet and dry materials under cover protected from rainfall, runoff and wind.
- b. During rainy season or if otherwise necessary, block nearby storm drains with approved drain fabric to restrict silt or other construction debris from entering storm drain. Bags full of gravel may be used to hold drain fabric in place.
- c. Wash concrete mixer and trucks only in designated areas of construction site where water will flow into containment ponds as designated on plans. Do not dispose of washout into street, storm drains, ditches or streams.
- d. Set up and operate cement mixers, mortar and plaster mixers on tarps or heavy plastic drop cloths.
- e. Place hay bales or other erosion controls on down-slopes to capture runoff carrying cement or mortar before it reaches storm drains.
- f. When breaking up paving, pick up all the pieces and dispose in containers or dumpsters.
- g. Recycle large chunks of broken concrete, excess dry concrete, grout and mortar at a landfill. Small amounts may be disposed of in trash containers.
- h. **NEVER** bury any construction waste material at the construction site.
- i. Do not place any waste material in gutters.
- j. Portable toilets are to be maintained in sanitary and good working order and placed at least ten (10) feet away from City curb or gutter.
- k. Do not hose down dirty pavement or surfaces into gutters. Use dry clean-up methods by sweeping and vacuuming.
- l. **NEVER** allow trucks involved in construction or deliveries to track mud or dirt into streets.
- m. When washing exposed aggregate or salted driveways and sidewalks, do not allow wash water containing cement residue, salt or acids to enter gutters or storm drains.
- n. **NEVER** wash or dispose wash water from paint brushes, rollers or paint equipment into gutters.