



## **GRADING PERMIT INFORMATION PACKET**

Public Works Department  
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The purpose of a grading permit is to regulate grading on private property within the City of Solvang to safeguard life and property, to control erosion and to promote public welfare. Permitted site grading must be consistent with the General Plan, the City Grading Ordinance and the California Building Code. No person shall commence or perform any grading, excavation or fill without first obtaining a grading permit from the City Engineer unless the grading activity is exempt.

### ***Activities exempt from a grading permit:***

1. An excavation or fill which does not exceed 3 feet in vertical depth, measured from the natural ground slope and/or;
2. An excavation involving less than 30 cubic yards of material moved in any 12-month period.
3. An excavation for tanks, vaults, basements, swimming pools or footings of a building or structure authorized by a valid building permit.
4. Work in any public road, right of way or easement, unless the work affects or is involved in the construction of a building or structure subject to regulations of the city building code.
5. Minor grading work associated with a building permit, when the City Engineer waives the grading permit requirement.

**If an inspection made during construction determines that a grading permit is required, all work must stop until a grading permit is obtained.**

### ***How to Apply for a City of Solvang Grading Permit***

Application for grading permits shall be filed with the City Engineer on forms furnished by the Public Works Department or online and shall include:

1. A description of the land on which the proposed work is to be done, by lot, block, tract and street address or by similar description;
2. Two copies of a grading plan;
3. Quantity and type of material to be excavated or filled;
4. Purpose of grading;
5. Source of material to be used for fill and/or location to which excavation material will be removed;
6. A statement of expected duration of grading;

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7. Description of routes for hauling material, proposed hours of work, and anticipated inspections;
8. Geotechnical engineer's report, when required.

The application must be signed by the owner of record.

- When other than the current owner or licensed contractor is applying for a grading permit, a notarized Letter of Authorization is required, giving authority to sign as the owner's agent.
- Contractors acting as agent for the owner must have a currently active California state contractors license, worker's compensation coverage, and a current City of Solvang business license
- An Encroachment permit is needed if you are connecting a new driveway to a City-maintained road.

A Civil Engineer shall prepare all grading plans. The grading plan shall include following information:

1. Scale of 1"=20' or larger
2. North arrow
3. Name, title and signature of plan preparer
4. Site address, assessor parcel number and owner information
5. Vicinity map showing site relative to roads and waterways
6. Property boundaries with dimensions, location of existing buildings and structures on the property and within 15' of the boundaries thereof, adjoining streets or easements
7. Existing contour lines at 2-foot maximum intervals showing all topographic features and drainage patterns
8. Proposed contour lines at 2-foot maximum intervals showing all new topographic features and any changes to drainage patterns
9. Limits of grading including all cut and fill lines, including borrow and stockpile locations
10. The location of any 100-year flood plain or waterway
11. The location and finish floor elevation of all proposed structures
12. Estimated quantities of cut, fill, export and import
13. Proposed drainage improvements
14. Erosion control storm water management plan
15. Compliance with the Administrative Guidelines of the City Tree Ordinance.

These are minimum criteria; additional information may be required during plan check.

It is the design engineer's responsibility to incorporate all recommendations from the soil engineering and geology reports in the approved grading plans.

***Fees for a City of Solvang Grading Permit***

Grading Permit < 30 cubic yards	No permit required
Grading Permit > 30 cubic yards	2% of the value of proposed work*

\*Cost estimate to be provided by the applicant's Civil Engineer and reviewed and approved by the City Engineer. The City may accept a professional estimate from someone other than a Civil Engineer if in the City Engineer's sole discretion it is reasonable to do so.

Grading permits shall expire and become null and void if the work authorized under such permit has not commenced within 120 days or is not completed within one year of the date of issue, except that prior to expiration of the permit, the City Engineer may grant a reasonable extension of the time upon a showing of evidence that unusual difficulties have prevented start or completion of the work within the time limits specified.

The applicant for a grading permit shall file a performance bond in an amount as determined by the City Engineer to ensure completion of the grading project.

In lieu of the bond, the applicant may make a deposit of cash or of a certified check or cashier's check.

***Inspections***

During progress of work under a grading permit, inspections shall be made as provided in this section and work shall not continue until approval to proceed with any changes specified has been granted following inspection.

1. The permittee shall be responsible for notifying the City Engineer at least 24-hours prior to the time when inspection is to be made.
2. Rough grading inspection shall be made during the work upon request of the owner or permittee and when all rough grading is completed.
3. Structures inspection shall be made when pipe or reinforcing is in place and before concrete is poured or pipe is covered for all supporting, containing and protective structures.
4. Upon request, the City Engineer shall issue a grading certificate after all grading work is completed, certifying that such work was completed in accord with the conditions of the permit.

A geotechnical engineer or civil engineer may be required to inspect parts or all of the grading project. Inspections shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- During the site preparation and placement of fill on slopes
- During the placement of fills intended to support a structure
- During the installation of subsurface drainage facilities
- During the construction of gravity-type retaining walls

***Permit Conditions***

The permittee and his agents shall carry out the proposed grading in accordance with approved plans and specifications, the conditions of the permit and with the requirements of the City Grading Ordinance.

The permittee and his agents shall maintain all required protective devices and temporary drainage during the progress of the grading work shall be responsible for observance of hours of work, dust controls and methods of hauling.

The permittee or his agents shall be responsible for maintenance of the site until such time as the City Engineer has granted a certificate or notice of final approval. The permittee, his agents and each or all of them shall become subject to the penalties set forth in this chapter in the event of failure to comply with this chapter and other applicable laws of the city. No approval shall exonerate the permittee or his agents from the responsibility of complying with the provisions and intent of this chapter.

If at any time it is determined by the City Engineer that material has been spilled upon City streets during the course of hauling material from the site by the permittee, the City Engineer shall immediately notify the permittee to remove the material from the City streets and to clean the City streets, including the sweeping thereof. If such material is not removed and the City streets cleaned within 48-hours after receiving such notice, the City Engineer may cause the street to be cleaned by City forces at the expense of the permittee.

The City Engineer may issue a stop work order if, at any time during progress of the work it appears that public or private property is endangered and may impose special precautions to be followed as a condition for continuance of the work. Such special precautions may include, but shall not be limited to, flatten exposed slopes, additional drainage facilities, berms, terracing, compaction, cribbing and retaining walls.

The City Engineer may authorize work done under supervision of a registered civil engineer retained by the owner or the permittee, and accept such certifications by the engineer as will ensure that the work was done in accord with the provisions of the permit and of this chapter.

***Bond Requirement for a City of Solvang Grading Permit***

The applicant for a grading permit shall file a performance bond satisfactory in amount, substance and form to the City, prior to the issuance of any grading permit. In lieu of the bond, the applicant may make a deposit of cash or of a certified check or cashier's check.

The amount of the bond or deposit shall be fixed by the City Engineer. He shall set the same in a sum sufficient to ensure prompt completion of the entire

excavation project within specified time limits and in compliance with plans and specifications therefore.

If the quantity of material to be graded, excavated or filled exceeds 10,000 cubic yards, the application for a permit shall be made by the owner or lessee of the land upon which the grading, excavation or fill is to be made, and such owner or lessee shall also furnish the bond.

If the amount of such material to be removed is less than 10,000 cubic yards, the application may be made by the owner or lessee of the land upon which the grading, excavation or fill is to be made, or the application may be made by any authorized contractor or agent of such owner or lessee, and the bond required under this chapter shall be furnished by such applicant.

Any contractor or other person engaged in continuous or repeated excavations may post a blanket bond or a blanket deposit in an amount sufficient to ensure prompt completion of all excavation projects being conducted at any one time. If the number or amount of excavation project exceeds the amount of the bond or deposit, the City Engineer may require additional bond or deposit to ensure completion of all work being done at any one time.

***Permit Denial, Suspension or Revocation***

A permit shall not be issued where the work proposed is likely to endanger public or private property, taking into consideration saturation of earth by rains, surface water runoff, earth movement or subsurface conditions or susceptibility to erosion. Failure of any officer, agent or employee of the City to observe or recognize hazardous conditions shall not relieve the owner or permittee of responsibility for damages from work performed nor transfer responsibility for such damages to the City, nor to any of its officers, agents or employees.

Upon failure to comply with any of the conditions of this chapter or the permit, the City Engineer may revoke or suspend the permit and, in either case, shall notify the owner or permittee of such action and the reasons therefore.

If the operations of the permittee create an unreasonable nuisance by reason of dust or noise, or otherwise, the City Engineer may require the permittee to take reasonable measures to abate such nuisance and may revoke or suspend the permit until such measures are taken.

If a permit is denied or revoked, the applicant may appeal to the City Council pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 6 of the City Code.

**City of Solvang**

**GRADING STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS**

***Grading Standards and Specifications***

1. No excavation shall be made with a cut face steeper in slope than one and one-half horizontal to one vertical (1 1/2:1) except under one or more of the following conditions:
  - A. The material in which the excavation is made is sufficiently stable to sustain a slope of steeper than one and one-half horizontal to one vertical (1 1/2:1), and a written statement of a civil engineer, retained by the owner or permittee, licensed by the state of California, to that effect is submitted and approved by the City Engineer. The statement shall state that the site has been inspected and that the deviation from the slope specified above will not result in property damage. Where, in the judgment of the City Engineer, additional tests are required, he may require soil tests and laboratory tests by a qualified soils engineer approved by the City Engineer;
  - B. A retaining wall or other approved support is provided to support the face of the excavation.
2. All graded surfaces and materials, whether filled, excavated, transported or stockpiled, shall be wetted, protected or contained in such a manner as to prevent any nuisance from dust, or spillage upon adjoining property or streets. Equipment and materials on the site shall be used in such a manner as to avoid excessive dust. Roadways on the site shall be surfaced or wetted sufficiently to prevent excessive dust.
3. If drainage facilities and grading shall be so designed and maintained that drainage is directed into or upon public streets, it shall be done in a manner and at a location to be approved by the City Engineer, or into natural or improved drainage channels in a manner and at a location approved by the City Engineer.
4. Exposed banks or slopes, both cut and fill, shall be smoothly finished by blading or hand-sloping or equal, and no such bank or slope shall exceed a height of twenty-five feet (25') without terraces or berms approved by the City Engineer. Down drains from terraces shall consist of pipes or paved channels or other means approved by the City Engineer.
5. Berms having a minimum width of five feet (5') shall be provided between the top or bottom of a slope and road right of way.
6. Road right-of-way lines shall be so designed that all cut and fill slopes are included within such right-of-way lines.
7. All cut and fill slopes shall be within properties or parcels under one ownership; that is, they shall not be divided horizontally.
8. Exposed slopes in excess of three feet (3') in vertical heights shall be planted to prevent erosion, or otherwise protected in a manner approved by the City Engineer, unless by reason of soil conditions or the location of the site, the City Engineer determines such planting is not necessary to prevent erosion.

9. The City Engineer may require an excavation to be made with a cut face flatter in slope than one and one-half horizontal to one vertical (1 1/2:1) if he finds the material in which the excavation is to be made is unusually subject to erosion, or if other conditions make such flatter cut slope necessary for stability and safety.
10. Excavations shall not extend below the angle of repose or natural slope of the soil under the nearest point of any footing or foundation of any building or structure, unless such footing or foundation is first properly underpinned or protected against settlement.
11. No fill shall be made which creates any exposed surface steeper in slope than two horizontal to one vertical (2:1), except under one or more of the following conditions:
  - A. The fill is located so that settlement, sliding or erosion of the fill material will not result in property damage or a hazard to adjoining property, streets or buildings;
  - B. A written statement from a civil engineer, licensed by the state of California, certifying that he has inspected the site and that the proposed deviation from the slope specified above will not endanger any property, or result in property damage, is submitted to and approved by the City Engineer.
12. The City Engineer may require that the fill be constructed with an exposed surface flatter than two horizontal to one vertical (2:1), if he finds that, under the particular conditions, such flatter surface is necessary for stability and safety.
13. Whenever a fill is to be made of materials other than clean soil or earth, the grading permit issued by the City Engineer shall be subject to the following additional limitations and requirements:
  - A. The fill shall be completed within a reasonable length of time, said time limit to be determined by the City Engineer and to be specified on the grading permit.
  - B. No grading permit shall be issued for the filling of materials other than clean soil or earth until a faithful performance bond in the amount of at least ten percent (10%) more than the estimated cost of adequately covering such fill with clean soil or earth has been filed with the City Engineer and approved by him. Such faithful performance bond shall be executed by a corporate surety and shall be approved as to form by the city attorney. Such bond shall inure to the benefit of the city and be conditioned upon the faithful performance of the work required under the terms and conditions of the grading permit to the satisfaction of the City Engineer. In lieu of such faithful performance bond, a cash deposit in such amount may be made to the city clerk with the approval of the City Engineer.
14. All fills intended to support buildings, structures, or where otherwise required to be compacted for stability of material, shall be compacted, inspected and tested in accordance with the following provisions:
  - A. The natural ground surface shall be prepared by removal of topsoil and vegetation, and if necessary, shall be graded to a series of terraces.

- B. The fill shall be spread in a series of layers, each not exceeding six inches (6") in thickness, and shall be compacted by sheepsfoot roller or other approved method after each layer is spread.
  - C. The moisture content of the fill material shall be controlled at the time of spreading and compaction to obtain required maximum density.
  - D. The fill material after compaction shall have minimum relative density of not less than ninety percent (90%) of maximum density, as determined by the AASHTO Soil Compaction Test, T99-49, as modified, to use twenty five (25) blows of a ten (10) pound hammer falling eighteen inches (18") in each of three (3) layers of soil in a one-thirtieth (1/30) cubic foot cylinder, or other approved testing method giving equivalent test results, in all portions of the fill requiring compaction.
  - E. A compaction test, as provided in this subsection shall be taken for each eighteen inches (18") of fill, or portion thereof, measured vertically from the lowest point of the area to be filled.
  - F. A written report of the compaction, showing location and depth of test holes, materials used, moisture conditions, recommended soil-bearing pressures, and relative density obtained from all tests, prepared by a civil engineer licensed by the state of California shall be submitted to the City Engineer for approval.
15. The City Engineer may require additional tests or information if the conditions or materials are such that additional information is necessary and may modify or delete any of the above listed requirements that are unnecessary.