



## Engineering Department

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### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. Does my project require a California licensed civil engineer?

Hiring a California-licensed engineer will provide specialized knowledge regarding the principles of engineering, building code requirements, and local conditions including earthquake activity and geotechnical hazards. A licensed engineer may be required to provide design, analysis, and evaluation of complex soil conditions, grading, foundation and site work, retaining walls, hydrology, structural elements, and mechanical or electrical systems. The resulting plans, specifications, and supporting documents are required to be signed and sealed (stamped) by the engineer. It is your decision as to which engineer you employ, The Board of Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists (BPELSG) can assist in verifying if an engineer is properly licensed and if any complaints or disciplinary action has been taken against them. For more information, the BPELSG can be contacted at (866) 780-5370, [BPELSG.License.Verification@dca.ca.gov](mailto:BPELSG.License.Verification@dca.ca.gov) or via their website.

#### 2. Does my project require a geotechnical engineer or geologist?

Geologic conditions exist within the City of Encinitas that can be dangerous when land is developed. Unstable slopes, slide-prone geologic formations, faults, and liquefaction-prone soils occur in the City and must be addressed during the development permit phase of the project. The Engineering Department is charged with ensuring new development is sound and in compliance with the California Building Code (CBC). We may require certain geotechnical studies and investigations to ensure the ground under the proposed improvements does not settle and the adjacent soils are not destabilized.

Geotechnical studies and investigations are only acceptable when certified by a California registered geotechnical engineer or geologist. Geotechnical engineers are civil engineers who obtained additional experience and passed a specialized geotechnical engineering examination. Geologists are scientists of the Earth. The City of Encinitas only accepts soils reports signed and sealed by a California registered geotechnical engineer or geologist.

**3. When is a grading permit required?**

Any earthwork greater than 50 CY that involves grubbing, excavating, embanking, or filling requires a grading permit. (Encinitas Municipal Code 23.24.125.1) Note that grubbing is the removal of vegetation by disturbing the soil surface. To calculate earthwork, see question number 4.

**4. How do I calculate earthwork?**

Earthwork is the sum of cut, fill, and remedial grading. For example, CUT + FILL + REMEDIAL = TOTAL EARTHWORK. Also, IMPORT + EXPORT + REMEDIAL = TOTAL EARTHWORK.

**5. When can I schedule pre-construction meeting for grading/improvements?**

It shall be the duty of the person doing the work, authorized by a grading/improvement permit, to schedule a pre-construction meeting with the Engineering Inspector. The pre-construction meeting shall be scheduled at least 24 hours prior to any grading, brushing, clearing, or construction of improvements.

**6. When are grading permit securities released?**

A one-time partial release at rough grade approval at the discretion of the Engineering inspector, up to a maximum of 75%. Final release occurs when as-builts and the certificate of final grading and field clearance for occupancy are signed off by the Engineering inspector. Note: 25% of the securities posted for improvement permits will be held for a one-year warranty period.

**7. When is a soils report required?**

Per Municipal Code 23.24.120, a soils report is required for any grading permit application. A grading permit is required when earthwork is greater than 50 CY. To calculate earthwork, see question number 4.

**8. The approved grading plan/improvement plan shows work in the City's right-of-way. Do I need to apply for a separate permit before beginning construction in the right-of-way?**

Yes. A separate Public Right-of-Way (PROW) Permit is required for any work in the public right-of-way or a public easement.

**9. How long will it take for my PROW permit to be issued?**

PROW permits have a 10-business-day review cycle and it usually takes a couple reviews to get your permit approved by the various City Departments. You can expect a 20-business-day turnaround time.

**10. When does my PROW expire?**

PROW permits expire when the associated Certificate of Insurance on file expires unless otherwise noted.

**11. Does the City have design standards?**

The City accepts the Standards and Guidelines found here:

<https://www.encinitasca.gov/government/departments/engineering/capital-improvement-program/land-development-engineering-references-resources>

and the San Diego Regional Standard Drawings found here:

<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/CIP/regional-stds.html>

**12. How do I log into the CSS portal?**

Access CSS here: <https://portal.encinitasca.gov/CustomSelfService#/home>

**13. How do I apply for different permits?**

CSS guides are found here:

<https://www.encinitasca.gov/government/departments/css-guides>

**14. Can I apply for a building permit while I apply for a grading permit?**

Grading plans shall be separate from the building plan set and will be permitted separately. However, the building plans and grading plans may be submitted at the same time. The approved grading plan shall be attached to the building plan. The Engineering Department planchecker will verify agreement between the approved grading plan and building permit site plan prior to building plan approval.

**15. How much does a grading permit cost?**

Please see the current Engineering Schedule of Fees:

<https://www.encinitasca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/7497/638554224035230000>