COUNTY OF PLACER
Community Development Resource Agency

BUILDING

Administrative Policy
Conventional Light-Frame Construction

TO: Building Department Staff

From: Bob Martino, Chief Building Official

Approved: Chief Building Official, Bob Martino 12/21/07

Effective Date: January 1, 2008

ISSUE:
The proper application of the Conventional Construction Provisions for simple buildings outlined in the 2007 California Building Code Section 2308.

BUILDING DIVISION ANALYSIS:
The primary focus of this policy is for the determination of the applicability of requiring a soils report when exercising the provisions for conventional light-frame construction under the 2007 California Building Code. The code would seem to require a soils report for any building regulated by Chapter 16 in Seismic Design Category D without exception and without allowing the Building Official any discretion. Due to the restrictions the code puts on buildings that qualify for the use of the conventional provisions, a review of this requirement is warranted because these are typically very simple buildings or additions to existing structures.

BACKGROUND
Section 2308 does primarily two things, one, it outlines which building types qualify for use of the conventional light-frame construction, as well as limiting the design criteria the building must fall within to qualify and, two, outlines the specific prescriptive requirements which must be met depending the Seismic Design Category (SDC) the building falls within (A,B,C,D,E). For SDC B or C there are added conventional provisions required, and in SDC D or E another level of additional conventional requirements are prescribed.

There are also prescriptive provisions that allow for footing design in all SDC categories. Section 1805.4.2 addresses a prescriptive footing design for buildings which qualify under the conventional light-frame construction provisions. This table is applicable in all SDC's when the footnotes are applied.

Section 1613.1 Ex. excludes wood frame buildings built and conforming to the provisions of Section 2308 from being analyzed for seismic-force-resisting systems per Chapter 16.

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Another important factor to note is that in the CBC section "Effective Use of the IBC/CBC" number 10 – Foundations, it states, "A foundation system must be designed that provides adequate support for gravity and lateral loads. Walls of buildings of conventional light-frame construction, as defined in Section 202, are permitted to be supported by footings constructed in accordance with Table 1805.4.2. ..." which further illustrates that in very simple buildings the prescriptive provisions of the code are adequate to meet forces imposed on the building.

POLICY:

This policy is established to develop and maintain consistency for interpretation and application of this provision.

A building which totally qualifies to be built under the Conventional Light-Frame Construction provisions of Section 202, Section 2302.1, and 2308, and where the entire building can be built prescriptively, and where no design is required for any portion of the building by Chapter 16, will not require a soils report under the provisions of Chapter 16 and 18 regardless of the determined Seismic Design Category. This is due to the fact that engineered design is not expressly required by code for buildings that have the ability to be built entirely under the conventional light-frame construction provisions and utilizing Table 1805.4.2.

The SDC will be determined solely for the purpose of determining the applicable conventional light-frame requirements of Section 2308 and Table 1805.4.2.

Buildings where the total building, or a portion of the building, falls outside of the conventional light-frame construction provisions and are therefore required to have an engineered design, and are subject to the provisions of Chapter 16 and Chapter 18, will require the prescribed soils report as identified in Section 1802.

This policy shall not be interpreted as to prevent the Building Department from requiring a soils report on a case-by-case basis regardless of the buildings ability to be constructed prescriptively if site conditions warrant its necessity.