



Land Use Services Department Building and Safety Division

Purpose of Grading Program

The purpose of the grading program is to ensure that private property is graded to ensure proper drainage, prevent impact to adjacent properties and not create erosion problems. Improper grading can result in localized flooding, landslides, and differential settlement. In order to ensure the design and construction are done properly, San Bernardino County requires an applicant to apply for a grading permit.

Based on the California Building Code, Appendix J-Section J103:

A grading permit is required if one or more of the following occurs:

1. A grading permit is required for any grading activity that exceeds one hundred cubic yards (100 C.Y.).
2. The building official finds it necessary to submit grading plans and obtain permits due to a threat to public health and safety.
3. If grading will occur within an environmentally sensitive area, the building official may require the applicant to submit grading plans and obtain permits.

A grading permit is not required if one or more of the following occurs:

1. If grading in an isolated, self-contained area, provided there is no danger to the public, and that such grading will not adversely affect adjoining properties.
2. Excavation for construction that does not alter the drainage pattern or place additional fill on the site.
3. Cemetery graves.
4. Agricultural purposes.
5. Refuse disposal sites controlled by other regulations.
6. Excavations for wells, or trenches for utilities.
7. Mining, quarrying, excavating, processing or stockpiling rock, sand, gravel, aggregate or clay controlled by other regulations, provided such operations do not affect the lateral support of, or significantly increase stresses in, soil on adjoining properties.
8. Exploratory excavations performed under the direction of a registered design professional.

When applying for a grading permit, the following technical studies or items may be required prior to plan submittal:

A drainage study will be required if one or more of the following occurs:

1. If a project is adding impervious surface that may affect the drainage of a site.
2. If a project will alter the drainage pattern of the site or encroach within a drainage course or channel.
3. If the project is located within a designated FEMA floodway.

A Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP)/Post Construction Management Plan (PCMP) will be required if the following occurs:

1. A WQMP/PCMP is required if the project is located within the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) boundaries of San Bernardino County and meets the thresholds depicted in their Technical Guidance Documents located at:
<https://dpw.sbcounty.gov/wqmp-templates-and-forms/>

Please note that the thresholds are defined by square footage of impervious area; others by land area of development; others by area disturbed, and will depend on the designated design category for the project. Some examples of the design categories include: residential and non-residential developments, automotive shops, restaurants, gasoline outlets, and projects adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas or water bodies.

Additional Permit Requirements:

Erosion control measures must be shown on the grading plans; including the prevention of sedimentation, or flood damage to off-site property.

Please refer to additional Grading and Erosion Control Guidelines at:

<https://lus.sbcounty.gov/land-development-home/grading-and-erosion-control/>

Note: Additional requirements may be applicable, as determined by the Building Official.