

## APPENDIX J

# GRADING

*The provisions contained in this appendix are not mandatory unless specifically referenced in the adopting ordinance.*

### User notes:

**About this appendix:** Appendix J provides standards for the grading of properties. The appendix also provides standards for the administration and enforcement of a grading program, including permit and inspection requirements. Appendix J was originally developed in the 1960s and used for many years in jurisdictions throughout the western United States. It is intended to provide consistent and uniform code requirements anywhere grading is considered an issue.

**Code development reminder:** Code change proposals to this appendix will be considered by the IBC—Structural Code Development Committee during the 2019 (Group B) Code Development Cycle. See explanation on page iv.

### SECTION J101 GENERAL

**J101.1 Scope.** The provisions of this chapter apply to grading, excavation and earthwork construction, including fills and embankments. Where conflicts occur between the technical requirements of this chapter and the geotechnical report, the geotechnical report shall govern.

**J101.2 Flood hazard areas.** Unless the applicant has submitted an engineering analysis, prepared in accordance with standard engineering practice by a *registered design professional*, that demonstrates the proposed work will not result in any increase in the level of the base flood, grading, excavation and earthwork construction, including fills and embankments, shall not be permitted in *floodways* that are in *flood hazard areas* established in Section 1612.3 or in *flood hazard areas* where design flood elevations are specified but *floodways* have not been designated.

### SECTION J102 DEFINITIONS

**J102.1 Definitions.** The following words and terms shall, for the purposes of this appendix, have the meanings shown herein. Refer to Chapter 2 of this code for general definitions.

**BENCH.** A relatively level step excavated into earth material on which fill is to be placed.

**COMPACTION.** The densification of a fill by mechanical means.

**CUT.** See “Excavation.”

**DOWN DRAIN.** A device for collecting water from a swale or ditch located on or above a slope, and safely delivering it to an approved drainage facility.

**EROSION.** The wearing away of the ground surface as a result of the movement of wind, water or ice.

**EXCAVATION.** The removal of earth material by artificial means, also referred to as a cut.

**FILL.** Deposition of earth materials by artificial means.

**GRADE.** The vertical location of the ground surface.

**GRADE, EXISTING.** The grade prior to grading.

**GRADE, FINISHED.** The grade of the site at the conclusion of all grading efforts.

**GRADING.** An excavation or fill or combination thereof.

**KEY.** A compacted fill placed in a trench excavated in earth material beneath the toe of a slope.

**SLOPE.** An inclined surface, the inclination of which is expressed as a ratio of horizontal distance to vertical distance.

**TERRACE.** A relatively level step constructed in the face of a graded slope for drainage and maintenance purposes.

### SECTION J103 PERMITS REQUIRED

**J103.1 Permits required.** Except as exempted in Section J103.2, grading shall not be performed without first having obtained a *permit* therefor from the *building official*. A grading *permit* does not include the construction of retaining walls or other structures.

**J103.2 Exemptions.** A grading *permit* shall not be required for the following:

1. Grading in an isolated, self-contained area, provided that the public is not endangered and that such grading will not adversely affect adjoining properties.
2. Excavation for construction of a structure permitted under this code.
3. Cemetery graves.
4. Refuse disposal sites controlled by other regulations.
5. Excavations for wells, or trenches for utilities.
6. Mining, quarrying, excavating, processing or stockpiling rock, sand, gravel, aggregate or clay controlled by other regulations, provided that such operations do not affect the lateral support of, or significantly increase stresses in, soil on adjoining properties.
7. Exploratory excavations performed under the direction of a *registered design professional*.

Exemption from the *permit* requirements of this appendix shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be