



**City of Santa Clarita**  
**Building & Safety Division**  
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 140  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355  
(661) 255-4935

## **Mudslide/Erosion Information**

Many areas of the Santa Clarita Valley are located in hillside areas prone to erosion or mudslides during periods of heavy rains. Uncontrolled erosion can often lead to major slope failures and significant property damage.

### **What to do if you experience a mudslide or serious erosion problem on your property:**

If you observe or are notified by a City inspector that a serious or potentially serious condition exists with a slope or hillside on, or adjacent to your property, you should immediately take action to prevent further damage and reduce or eliminate the hazard(s).

### **The following protective steps can help you prevent further damage from the rain and reduce or eliminate the hazard to your property and adjacent properties:**

#### *If safe to do so...*

... clear out mud or loose dirt, debris, and other obstructions from v-ditches, inlets and other drainage devices to help water flow freely and unobstructed to its intended destination in the storm drain system, the public way, or to a natural drainage course.

... protect exposed, unplanted slopes with visqueen plastic to protect the surface of the slope from becoming eroded and saturated. Excessive amounts of water flowing onto exposed slope surfaces can lead to additional mudslides, landslides or slope failures which can be dangerous and create a hazard to adjacent properties. Plastic cover for slopes should have a minimum thickness of 6 mil. The sheets should be overlapped to prevent water from flowing underneath and should be secured with weighted sandbags to prevent the plastic from slipping or being blown away.

...use sandbags to divert water away from slopes into approved drainage device courses and to prevent water, mud and debris from flowing into your house. Do not let water pond at the top of the slope. When placing sandbags, make sure they are placed where they do not divert water onto adjacent properties that may be damaged as a result. Keep the flow of water in designed drainage areas or natural watercourses such as v-ditches, channels or creeks.

#### *After a rainstorm...*

...contact a professional geologist to give you specific recommendations on how to repair and stabilize the slope or hillside. A geologist can prepare a detailed analysis on the relative hazard that may exist. Such analysis should be reviewed the City. If a City geologist visits your property, it is generally to make a preliminary safety assessment. The City geologist does not conduct tests or perform a slope stability analysis for private properties; these must be done by a private geologist hired by the property owner.

...have slope repairs done by a qualified grading contractor. Plans for the repairs must be prepared by a licensed Civil Engineer and submitted to the City along with all of the geotechnical reports for review and approval prior to issuance of the repair permits.

...clean up mud and debris from the property but do not place it in the public right-of-way (street or sidewalk areas).

The clean-up contractor should haul mud and debris off the property to an approved location. Temporary stock piles of dirt, mud and debris placed in the driveway must be covered during the rain to prevent mud and debris from flowing into the public right-of-way and storm drain system.

## **What to do to prevent mudslide and erosion problems in the future:**

The following preventive steps can help reduce or prevent some common erosion and mudslide problems:

*Unless it is recommended otherwise by your Geologist, Soils, or Civil Engineer,*

...keep slopes well planted with deep-rooted vegetative material. During the rainy season, the plant root systems help stabilize the slope surfaces and prevent slope failures, mudslides and excessive erosion that produce debris flows and extensive property damage. Native, drought-tolerant species should be used when the slope is not irrigated. Other plant species may be used if an adequate irrigation system is installed; however, to minimize water usage and guard against over watering of the slopes, drought tolerant or low water demand plants should be used. Contact your local Fire Department to ensure that your plant selection meets their requirements for low combustibility.

...Do not over water slopes. Excessive moisture levels in the slope can lead to instability and problems with adjacent retaining walls and other structures. To prevent inadequate drainage to slopes from broken irrigation lines, install adequate controls and shut-off valves to be sure no pressure lines are adjacent to the slope in case they are damaged.

...Never clear slopes of their vegetation, unless specific precautions have been taken to protect the slope during the rainy season by using protective devices such as temporary plastic visqueen, jute netting or other devices. Immediately, or as soon as practical, replant the slope with deep-rooted planting. Make sure that the irrigation system is well maintained and that you do not over water.

...Rebuild or repair broken or damaged drainage devices. If you notice a v-ditch or drainage inlet that needs maintenance or repairs by your Homeowner's Association (HOA) or Landscape Maintenance District (LMD), contact them immediately. If an HOA or LMD is not responsible for the maintenance of the drainage device, it is the responsibility of the property owner. The City does not maintain or repair any slopes or drainage devices on private property, unless it is within an easement for that

purpose and under the jurisdiction of the maintenance district.

...improve drainage from your property by ensuring that the yards slope away from the house and toward an approved drainage device or to the public way (the street). If water is ponding on portions of your property then you need to restore proper drainage by doing the necessary minor grading. Never drain property toward an adjacent property or onto a slope. If you will be moving a significant amount of dirt or diverting a drainage course, contact the City's Engineering Services Division prior to doing the work. You may need to obtain a grading permit before you start.

...never alter a natural drainage course. Grading and construction of walls, diverters, crossings, bridges, etc. is prohibited in riverbeds and all blue-line water courses such as the Santa Clara River, Sand Canyon Wash, Iron Canyon Wash, Placerita Creek, Newhall Creek, etc. even if they are on private property, unless permits are first obtained from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Game, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the City of Santa Clarita. For further information on how to obtain a conditional permit, call the City's Engineering Services Division at (661) 286-4060.

### **Common questions about storm-related erosion and mudslide damage:**

**Q: Who is responsible for the repair and maintenance of slopes and drainage devices on private property?**

A: Slopes, hillsides and all drainage devices on private property are the responsibility of the property owner. Only those slopes that are specifically designated as part of a Landscape Maintenance District Drainage Benefit Assessment Area or Homeowner's Association are maintained by these entities. The City cannot maintain, repair or fund any improvements to private property.

**Q: What is the City’s role in the event of a serious mudslide or erosion problem?**

A: The City’s Building and Safety Division is responsible for conducting safety inspections on private property. These inspections are only intended to establish whether the property and the buildings are safe to occupy.

If a hazardous or potentially dangerous condition is observed, the Building Inspector may ask the occupants of a house to vacate the property until either a more detailed safety assessment is made or until the necessary repairs are made to eliminate the hazard.

The Building Inspector may also serve a Notice to a property owner to initiate repairs or maintenance to a slope in order to remove a condition that may lead to a future hazard. This Notice is usually issued when a slope failure or partial failure has already occurred and is likely to get worse, or when maintenance to critical drainage devices is found to be inadequate. This Notice is issued with the intent of making the responsible property owner aware of these conditions and to instruct him or her of their responsibility for the required work. Failure to initiate the necessary repairs or maintenance may cause the City to record a Notice with the County Recorder’s Office. The recorded notice alerts future buyers, lenders, and other parties investigating the property that there exists a substandard or unsafe condition on the property. In severe hazard cases, and in cases involving more than one property, the City may initiate Code Enforcement proceedings through the District Attorney’s Office to obtain compliance.

From time to time, such as during a storm or just prior to the rainy season, City inspectors may monitor areas with known slope and geology problems to look for new signs of slope damage or hazards. City inspectors will inform the affected parties of the situation and issue a Notice when appropriate. They can also give you some general information about the city’s position on enforcement and permitting for the required repairs.

The City will also help you with information on how to get started, what repairs and maintenance needs to be done, and whether you need to contact a professional Engineer or Geologist for further help in planning any repairs.

**Q: Why are these conditions a hazard or a serious potential problem?**

A: Slope failures, mudslides and erosion can cause extensive property damage costing thousands of dollars to clean up and repair. They can also create a hazard to the life and safety of building occupants living adjacent to the affected slope. The property owner having responsibility for the slope may also be held responsible for damage caused to adjacent properties. For example, property owners that do not maintain the drainage devices on their property, or create conditions that induce slope failure thereby causing property damage to others, may be held responsible for the losses. Damage caused by an adjacent property is strictly a civil matter between property owners.

**Q: Who do I need to contact for further information?**

- A: **At the City:**
- Engineering Services ..... 286-4060
    - Inspection of slopes and drainage issues
    - Grading permit information
  
  - Building and Safety..... 255-4935
    - Inspection of buildings and building damage
    - Building permit information
  
  - Community Preservation ..... 255-4983
    - Inspection of substandard property conditions
  
  - Urban Forestry ..... 294-2567
    - Inspection of hazardous or damaged oak trees
    - Oak tree removal permit information

**Private Professionals:**

Grading, earth moving and slope repair work:  
Contact a grading contractor. See the telephone directory listing for Construction, Contractors, Grading Contractors, or Slope Repair Specialists.

Landslides, mudslides and slope failures: call a private geologist. See the telephone directory listing for Geologists, Geotechnical Engineers, or Soils Engineering.

Design of slope repairs, drainage devices and grading plans: Contact a Civil Engineer. See the telephone directory listing for Civil Engineering.

**City Assistance:**

- Stormwater Hotline ..... 661-222-7222
- Field Services Street Maintenance/Repair/Flooding or  
Hazards in the public right-of-way ..... 661-294-2520
- Grading Requirements & Permits ..... 661-286-4060
- Grading Inspections Engineering/Geotechnical Requirements by  
Engineering Services Division..... 661-255-4940
- Building & Safety - Building Inspections & Building Permits ..... 661-255-4935
- Community Preservation – for other Municipal Code Violations ..... 661-286-4076
- Landscape Maintenance Districts ..... 661-255-4910
- Urban Forestry ..... 661-294-2567

**State Agencies:**

- Statewide Flood Information ..... 800-952-5530
- Cal Trans Highway Information Net ..... 800-427-7623
- Contractors State License Board  
Disaster Hotline ..... 800-962-1125
- License Checkline ..... 800-321-2752

**Federal Agencies:**

- Disaster Information Helpline (declared emergencies only). ..... 800-525-0321  
(TTY for hearing/speech-impaired)..... 800-660-8005
- National Flood Insurance Program  
(Obtain policy/information)..... 800-427-4661

**Other Services Provided:**

American Red Cross (local chapter)

**Address:** 23838 Valencia Blvd. St. 120, Santa Clarita, CA 91355

**Phone:** (661) 259-1805

Salvation Army (local office)

**Address:** 17657 Sierra Hwy. Canyon Country, CA 91351

**Phone:** (661) 251-5680

**Sand Bags May Be Available at the Following Fire Stations in the Santa Clarita Valley:**

<b>Fire Station</b>	<b>Address</b>
Fire Station 73 *	24875 Railroad Avenue, Santa Clarita, CA 91321
Fire Station 76	27223 Henry Mayo Drive, Valencia, CA 91355
Fire Station 77	46833 Peace Valley Road. Gorman, CA 93243
Fire Station 81	8710 W. Sierra Highway, Agua Dulce, CA 91390
Fire Station 104 *	26201 Golden Valley Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350
Fire Station 107 *	18239 W. Soledad Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350
Fire Station 108 *	28799 Rock Canyon Drive, Santa Clarita, CA 91390
Fire Station 123 *	26321 N. Sand Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387
Fire Station 124	25870 Hemingway Avenue, Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381
Fire Station 126 *	26320 Citrus Drive, Santa Clarita, CA 91355
Fire Station 128	28450 Whites Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91351
Fire Station 132 *	29310 Sand Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387
Fire Station 149	31770 Ridge Route, Castaic, CA 91384
Fire Station 150 *	19190 Golden Valley Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387
Fire Station 156	24525 Copper Hill Drive, Santa Clarita, CA 91354

\*Located in the City of Santa Clarita

## **Geotechnical Engineers**

Allan E. Seward Engineering Geology, Inc.  
27825 Smyth Dr.  
Valencia, CA 91355  
(661) 294-0065

Earth Systems Services, Inc.  
1731 Walter St., Ste. A  
Ventura, CA 93003  
(805) 642-6727

Leighton & Associates  
26074 Avenue Hall, #21  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355  
(661) 257-7434

Miller Geosciences, Inc.  
23890 Copper Hill Drive, Ste. 111  
Valencia, CA 91354  
(661) 299-2206

R. T. Frankian & Associates, Inc.  
26027 Huntington Ln., Ste. A  
Santa Clarita, California 91355  
(818) 531-1501

Southwest Geotechnical, Inc.  
21704 W. Golden Triangle Rd., Ste. 425  
Santa Clarita, CA 91350  
(661) 222-9544

(Rev 02-2017)

## **Civil Engineers**

Alliance Land Planning & Engineering, Inc.  
27451 Tourney Rd., Ste. 140  
Valencia, CA 91355  
(661) 799-2760

CRC Enterprises  
27600 Bouquet Canyon Rd., Ste. 200  
Santa Clarita, CA 91350  
(661) 297-2336

Encompass Consultant Group  
333 N. Lantana Street, Suite 130  
Camarillo, CA 93010  
(805) 416-8704

Hunsaker & Associates Los Angeles, Inc.  
26074 Avenue Hall, #23  
Valencia, CA 91355  
(661) 294-2211

Hovell & Pilarski Engineering  
4525 Industrial St., Ste 4-L  
Simi Valley, CA 93063  
(805) 522-1900

Psomas & Associates  
28480 Avenue Stanford, Ste. 200  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355  
(661) 219-6000

Sikand Engineering Associates  
15230 Burbank Blvd., Ste. 100  
Van Nuys, CA 91411  
(818) 787-8550