



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency – Environmental Health



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Soil Boring Permitting Processes

Santa Cruz County Environmental Health (SCCEH) serves as a local permitting agency in Santa Cruz County, in accordance with 7.70.030 of the Santa Cruz County Code, and is responsible for reviewing all soil boring and groundwater monitoring well construction and destruction permit applications within our jurisdiction. The purpose of this document is to provide clear and comprehensive guidance on the processes involved in submitting soil boring permit applications to SCCEH. This includes the review and issuance of soil boring permits, notification requirements for drilling activities under a soil boring permit, and inspection expectations by SCCEH during drilling activities.

This permitting requirement ensures that soil borings are properly abandoned to mitigate and reduce contamination risks from various sources, such as surface water runoff, Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS), and subsurface sources, which may negatively affect groundwater and surface water quality. The Soil Boring Program aligns with the guidelines set forth in the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Bulletin 74-81 and Bulletin 74-90 (DWR Bulletin 74). These bulletins establish the technical standards for water well construction and destruction, including the abandonment of exploration holes (soil borings), with the goal of protecting groundwater resources.

Soil Boring Permitting Process:

Step 1: Determine if Soil Boring Permits are Required for a Drilling Project

A proposed drilling project requires a soil boring permit if soil borings meet the following criteria:

1. Soil borings are used for hydrologic purposes, such as grab-groundwater sampling, subterranean foundation design, or liquefaction studies.
2. Soil borings that are anticipated to encounter groundwater, based on professional knowledge and/or research, require a soil boring permit. However, soil borings that are less than 10 feet bgs and are used for the purpose of OWTS design do not require a permit as specified in DWR Bulletin 74-90, Monitoring Wells, Section 4.

Step 2: Determine if the Proposed Drilling Project is in SCCEH's Jurisdiction

The SCCEH soil boring permit requirement applies to all of Santa Cruz County except for the City of Watsonville.

Step 3: Submit the Required Soil Boring Permit Application to SCCEH

The following documents must be included with the application:

1. Completed permit application form with signatures from the property owner, driller, and consultant.
 - a. Soil boring permit application forms can be downloaded from:
https://scceh.com/Portals/6/Env_Health/Well%20Monitoring/FinalforNotification_BoringPermitApplicationForm.pdf
 - b. SCCEH accepts PDF signatures.
 - c. SCCEH accepts authorized agent forms provided by consultants, signed by the responsible party and/or property owner.
2. Site map depicting the proposed boring locations, including OWTS, surface water, known utilities, and groundwater wells.
3. Certificate of liability insurance from a C-57 licensed driller. Alternatively, the driller may submit a yearly certificate of liability insurance to SCCEH to be kept on file.
4. Payment of the soil boring application fee, which is currently \$420 for the first three borings. Each additional boring incurs a fee of \$105. Payment can be made by check or online through the provided invoice.
 - a. If a consultant requests to make an online payment, an invoice will be generated with a link for online payment. Online payments may be made via credit card or electronic check. Credit card payments may be subject to additional fees.
 - b. A soil boring permit application will not be deemed complete until the payment has been posted.

Prior to submitting a complete soil boring permit application, it is advisable for the applicant to review DWR Bulletin 74 to ensure that the proposed methods of destruction outlined in the application comply with these standards.

DWR Bulletin 74 standards can be found at the following site:

<https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Wells/Well-Standards/Combined-Well-Standards>

Soil boring permit applications can be submitted to our office in person, by mail, or via email. Our office is open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. To drop off a soil boring permit application at a different time, please call (831) 454-2022 to schedule an appointment with the Environmental Cleanup Office

Assistant. For additional submittal details, please review the soil boring permit application form.

Complete soil boring permit applications, along with the required payment, must be submitted a minimum of 10-days prior to the anticipated drill date. If a soil boring permit application is found to be incomplete, additional processing time will be required to address any missing information or documents.

Step 4: SCCEH Issues the Soil Boring Permit

Soil boring permit issuance will be based on SCCEH's review of the submitted soil boring permit application including the following aspects:

1. Completion of all fields in the permit application form.
2. Evaluation of soil boring locations in relation to potential contamination sources and groundwater/surface water. If borings are near such sources, stricter sealing methods may be required.
3. Verification that the proposed soil boring destruction methods meet the state's standard methods specified in DWR Bulletins 74-81 and 74-90.
4. Review of any proposed site-specific alternative destruction methods or requests for variances from general conditions and standards.

Step 5: Review Permit Conditions

Consultants are responsible for reviewing and following the general conditions outlined in the soil boring permit, as well as any special conditions based on site-specific circumstances listed on an approved soil boring permit.

Step 6: Notification of Drilling Activities

Consultants must notify SCCEH by phone or email, (831) 454-2022 or EHCleanup@santacruzcounty.us, of permitted drilling activities at least two business days in advance to schedule an inspection.

The notification should include the anticipated soil boring destruction time and the contact number of the on-site representative. Consultants must receive confirmation of the notification from SCCEH prior to conducting drilling activities.

Step 7: Inspection Process

Once you have notified SCCEH about your drilling activities, you may proceed with the work even if SCCEH is not physically present at the site. However, SCCEH must give approval for soil boring sealing prior to notified start time.

If SCCEH cannot be present during sealing of the soil boring, SCCEH may request the consultant or responsible party/property owner to provide a certification under penalty of perjury that the seal was constructed in accordance with SCCEH's Soil Boring Conditions and DWR Bulletin 74.

SCCEH does not anticipate observing each soil boring destruction, but instead inspections will be conducted randomly based on the availability of inspectors. By implementing random inspections, SCCEH aims to ensure compliance without the need for additional staff, thereby minimizing the impact on permit costs.

Any deviations to permitted soil boring activities must be communicated immediately to the SCCEH inspector.

Soil Boring Permit Process for Unexpected Groundwater Encounters:

Step 1: Unexpected Groundwater in Soil Boring During Drilling

If groundwater is encountered unexpectedly during soil boring field activities and the soil boring was not permitted, the consultant must immediately contact SCCEH by telephone. SCCEH may direct the consultant to wait for an inspector to arrive on-site to observe the soil boring destruction, or SCCEH may direct the consultant per verbal approval to seal the soil boring per DWR Bulletin 74 standards. If SCCEH is unable to be reached via telephone, the consultant should document all field activities including the soil boring construction and destruction methods.

Step 2: Submit the Required Soil Boring Permit Application to SCCEH

The consultant must submit a soil boring permit application to SCCEH within five business days of drilling activities, along with payment and field documentation of the soil boring construction and destruction methods.

The consultant will also be required to provide a certification under penalty of perjury that the boring seals were constructed in accordance with SCCEH's Soil Boring Conditions and DWR Bulletin 74. This certification should be submitted with the boring permit application.