



COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

Planning and Development

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: BUILDING & SAFETY STAFF  
FROM: FRANK BRECKENRIDGE, BUILDING OFFICIAL  
DATE: SEPTEMBER 27, 2000  
RE: **DIFFERENTIAL SETTLEMENT**

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Section 1806.2 of the 1997 Uniform Building Code requires footings be designed to minimize differential settlement when necessary. The code is silent on the extent of such “minimization”. Therefore, the purpose and intent of this memorandum is to establish the minimum criteria for compliance with this code section.

Effective immediately, the potential for differential settlement shall be addressed for all construction projects that exceed **1,000 square feet** in floor area. Soils reports and subsequent foundation recommendations therein shall include measures to mitigate differential settlement, which shall not exceed  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in 30 lineal feet.

The basis for these criteria is based on information we researched and obtained from the Navy Design Manual and Los Angeles County Development Guidelines for differential settlement. Table 4 of the Navy Design Manual indicates an angular distortion of  $\frac{1}{500}$  as the “safe limit for buildings where cracking is not permissible.” The value of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in 30-feet is interpolated from the graph in that table.

Building settlement due to seismic activity or other unanticipated activity is a separate issue and not addressed herein.