

- C. **Exemptions from permit requirements.** The following grading activities are exempt from the provisions of this Section and may be conducted without first obtaining a grading permit; provided that all grading shall still be subject to the grading standards of Chapter 17.62 (Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control Standards), and no exempt grading shall occur until the property owner has obtained a written exemption from the Department.
1. **Basements and footings.** Where authorized by a valid building permit, excavations below existing or finish grade for basements, and footings of a building, retaining walls or other structures; provided that this shall not exempt any fill using material from the excavation, nor exempt any excavation where the natural slope of the site exceeds 20 percent, or any excavation with an unsupported height greater than five feet after the completion of the structure.
  2. **Cemeteries.** Routine excavations and fills for graves.
  3. **Conservation project.** Grading that is a soil or water conservation project regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, or the California Department of Water Resources.
  4. **Cultivation.** Agricultural cultivation activities where allowed by Article 2 (Zones, Allowable Uses, and Zone Standards) including preparation of land for cultivation, other than grading for roadwork or pads for structures, and not including any tree removal, where the cultivation activities do not create an excavation greater than two feet in depth, or more than one foot of fill.
  5. **Exploratory excavation.** An exploratory excavation for the purpose of investigating subsurface geology, soil bearing capacity, etc., affecting or disturbing an area on a single parcel of less than 10,000 square feet and involving the movement of less than 50 cubic yards, under the direction of a soil engineer or engineering geologist.
  6. **Isolated grading.** Grading in an isolated, self-contained area if there is no danger to public or private property, only when approved by the Building Official or designee.
  7. **Minor excavation.** An excavation less than two feet in total depth; or that does not create a cut slope greater than five feet in height and steeper than one and one-half horizontal to one vertical, and is:
    - a. Not proposed where the natural slope of the site exceeds 20 percent;
    - b. Less than 50 cubic yards; and
    - c. Not less than 100 feet from any drainage course.
  8. **Minor fill.** A fill less than one foot in total depth and placed on natural terrain with a slope flatter than five horizontal to one vertical, or less than three feet in depth, not intended to support structures, which does not exceed 50 cubic yards, and is not less than 100 feet from any drainage course.
  9. **Public project.** Excavations or fill for a public project conducted, or approved and inspected by the Building Official or designee.
  10. **Road maintenance.** The grading or resurfacing of an existing, approved road for maintenance purposes, where neither the width nor length of the road, nor the height of cuts or the depth of fills is increased.
  11. **Wells, pipelines and utilities.** Excavations for wells and tunnels; routine pipeline maintenance practices disturbing areas less than 1,000 square feet; or installation, testing, placement in service, or the replacement of any necessary utility connection between an existing facility and an individual customer or approved development, for utilities regulated by the Public Utilities Commission, including electrical, water, sewage disposal or natural gas lines, on a single site or within a public right-of-way.