



County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development

Lisa Plowman, Director
 Jeff Wilson, Assistant Director
 Steve Mason, Assistant Director

January 24, 2020

Isla Vista Bluff Policy Update Building and Safety Division

- The Isla Vista Bluff Policy was developed in 2004 to mitigate hazards posed by bluff erosion on buildings and their occupants along Del Playa Road.
- The policy sets forth triggers for action based on the distance of the structure to the bluff face.
- The update to the policy follows a geotechnical study of the Isla Vista Bluff to evaluate maximum single event failure.
- The revised bluff policy requires property owners to conduct site specific geotechnical study by a qualified engineering geologist, depending on the distance to the bluff.
- The site study will provide guidance for hazard reduction and inform future actions for remediation of bluff hazards.
- The following table provides details on new requirements of the policy. The policy may be found at <https://www.countyofsb.org/plndev/building/bluffs.sbc>

Distance of building foundation to bluff face	County's Action	Owner's Action	Outcome
15-20 feet	Send a notice to the owner that the property is on the Isla Vista Bluff watch list and a site specific geotechnical study must be prepared and submitted to the County for review.	Hire geotechnical engineer to prepare a site specific study to establish maximum collapse width for a single event in a timely manner.	Establish a site specific threshold abatement plan based on maximum collapse width for a single event.
If no action taken by owner and bluff retreats to:			
10-15 feet	Issue a Notice of Violation, NOV, if site specific geotechnical study is not completed and an abatement plan established within 6 months of the request for a study.	Hire geotechnical engineer to prepare a site specific study to establish maximum collapse width for a single event within 6 months.	Establish a site specific threshold and abatement plan based on maximum collapse width for a single event.
If no action taken by owner and bluff retreats to:			
Less than 10 feet	Issue a Notice to Vacate the portion of the affected structure that is within 10 feet from bluff.	Vacate the affected unit(s) within 10 feet of the bluff and hire a geotechnical engineer to prepare a site specific study to establish maximum collapse width for a single event.	Establish a site specific threshold and abatement plan based on maximum collapse width for a single event.
Site Specific threshold and abatement plan:			
<p>Shallow Foundation: Obtain permit to cut back the building prior to the bluff face eroding to a distance that, in the event of site specific maximum collapse width, any portion of the building foundation or its appendages' foundation can be undermined.</p> <p>Deep Foundation: Retain structural engineer to work with the geotechnical engineer to evaluate the capacity of caissons and establish criteria beyond that a caisson is deemed ineffective to support building or balconies due to erosion of soil around the caisson or other structural criteria. Obtain building permit for building modification and cut back when caissons are deemed ineffective.</p>			