



New Soil Testing Requirements
Effective Date: March 1, 2012

For all new residential buildings and additions thereto:

Section R401.4 of the Virginia Residential Code allows the City of Portsmouth to request a geotechnical evaluation if any of several conditions exist. Section R401.4 states:

***R401.4 Soil Tests.** Where quantifiable data created by accepted soil science methodologies indicate expansive, compressible, shifting or other questionable soil characteristics are likely to be present, the **building official** shall determine whether to require a soil test to determine the soil's characteristics at a particular location. This test shall be done by an **approved agency** using an **approved method**.*

Certain infill lots may contain soil conditions that include compressible soil, expansive soil, shifting soil or other unknown conditions such as contamination that would be detrimental to the building or structure, that would cause damage or even foundation failure. For this reason, and based on filed conditions as determined by an inspector, City of Portsmouth will require a geotechnical evaluation for all infill lots. This geotechnical evaluation will include the following:

- 1.) Soil type classified according to the Unified Soil Classification System and Table R405.1 in the Virginia Residential Code.
- 2.) Soil bearing capacity
- 3.) Drainage characteristics
- 4.) Frost heave potential
- 5.) Volume change potential
- 6.) Any contamination of the soil that would affect health or safety

Corrective measures required to mitigate any adverse condition must be designed by a geotechnical engineer and submitted for our review at that time.

Any alternative must be approved by the Building Official.