BACKFILL OF SWIMMING POOLS

The purpose of this information bulletin is to establish the requirements for the backfilling of existing swimming pools. The method of backfilling approved by this Division depends on the intended future use of the fill. A pool may be backfilled with a structural compacted fill suitable for the support of footings or the pool shell may be left in-place and backfilled with an uncertified fill. In both cases, a grading permit is required. An approval from Planning Division and Public Works Department are required prior to submitting request to Building Safety Division.

I. BACKFILLING WITH STRUCTURAL COMPACTED FILL

A. Requirements for Placement of Structural Compacted Fill

In accordance with the Section J107 of Appendix J of 2022 California Building Codes (CBC), all material used to backfill swimming pools shall be placed on a natural undisturbed material or an approved compacted fill and compacted to a minimum of 90 percent relative compaction as determined by ASTM D 1557. Such fill shall be tested for relative compaction by a soil testing agency approved by this Division. A compaction report shall be submitted to the Building Safety Division for review before approval of any fill is given.

1. A Grading Permit shall be obtained with the total number of cubic yards of fill specified.
2. The pool shell shall be removed from the site.
3. Existing gas/plumbing link shall be properly capped; electrical and related equipment shall be removed.
4. The bottom of the excavation shall be inspected and approved by this Division and a soil engineer, if required, prior to placing of compacted fill.
5. A compaction report shall be submitted to the Building Safety Division for review and approval.
6. No foundation, if proposed, shall be constructed before the compaction report is reviewed and approved.
7. When required or provided, a soil report prepared by a licensed soils engineer and containing recommendations for temporary excavation, grading specifications, and an allowable bearing pressure for the foundation design shall be submitted to Building Safety Division for review and approval.

B. Inspections:

The Building Safety Division shall be notified when the grading operation is ready for each of the following inspections:

1. Bottom/excavation inspection.
2. Final inspection.
II. BACKFILLING WITH UNCERTIFIED FILL AND LEAVING THE POOL SHELL IN-PLACE

A. Conditions of Approval

Leaving the pool shell in-place and backfilling with uncertified fill may be allowed in self-contained areas where the fills are not to be used to support buildings or structures and no hazard will be created determined by the Building Safety Division.

1. A permit shall be obtained with the total cubic yards of fill specified. The permit shall indicate that the fill is uncertified.

2. A plot plan showing the pool location and showing distances to all buildings and property lines will be required.

3. The plot plan shall have the following notes:
   - Drainage holes, a minimum of twenty four (24) inches in diameter, shall be provided in the concrete in the pool bottom, a maximum of 8 feet apart to facilitate drainage. At least one hole shall be located in the deepest and one in the shallowest section of the pool shell.
   - Backfill shall consist of clean soil or gravel and shall be moistened and tractor rolled or tamped with a whacker into place.

4. The backfill shall be used for landscaping purpose only.

5. The existing pool shall not be located on ground sloping steeper than 10 percent. In the event that the pool is located on ground sloping steeper than 10 percent, then the backfilling procedures in Part I of this bulletin shall be followed.

6. Existing gas/plumbing line shall be properly capped; electrical and related equipment shall be removed.

7. Prior to placing any fill, obtain inspections approval for the required two drainage holes.

8. If bond beam is demolished, the concrete debris from the bond beam may be placed in the bottom of the pool to facilitate drainage; provided however, no concrete debris less than 6” in diameter, including coping, are placed within the two drainage holes.

B. Inspections:

1. Bottom inspection after required drainage holes have been made and prior to placing any fill.

2. Final inspection.