

**NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
**DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS**  
**GEOTECHNICAL UNIT**

**SUBSURFACE INVESTIGATION**

**SOIL AND ROCK LEGEND, TERMS, SYMBOLS, AND ABBREVIATIONS**

SOIL DESCRIPTION		GRADATION		ROCK DESCRIPTION		TERMS AND DEFINITIONS																																																																												
<p>SOIL IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE UNCONSOLIDATED, SEMI-CONSOLIDATED OR WEATHERED EARTH MATERIALS WHICH CAN BE PENETRATED WITH A CONTINUOUS FLIGHT POWER AUGER, AND WHICH YIELDS LESS THAN 100 BLOWS PER FOOT ACCORDING TO STANDARD PENETRATION TEST (AASHTO T206, ASTM D-1586). SOIL CLASSIFICATION IS BASED ON THE AASHTO SYSTEM AND BASIC DESCRIPTIONS GENERALLY SHALL INCLUDE: CONSISTENCY, COLOR, TEXTURE, MOISTURE, AASHTO CLASSIFICATION, AND OTHER PERTINENT FACTORS SUCH AS MINERALOGICAL COMPOSITION, ANGULARITY, STRUCTURE, PLASTICITY, ETC. EXAMPLE: VERY STIFF, GRAY SILTY CLAY, MOIST WITH INTERBEDDED FINE SAND LAYERS, HIGHLY PLASTIC, A-7-6</p>		<p><b>WELL GRADED</b>- INDICATES A GOOD REPRESENTATION OF PARTICLE SIZES FROM FINE TO COARSE UNIFORM- INDICATES THAT SOIL PARTICLES ARE ALL APPROXIMATELY THE SAME SIZE. (ALSO POORLY GRADED)  <b>GAP-GRADED</b>- INDICATES A MIXTURE OF UNIFORM PARTICLES OF TWO OR MORE SIZES.</p> <p><b>ANGULARITY OF GRAINS</b>            THE ANGULARITY OR ROUNDNESS OF SOIL GRAINS ARE DESIGNATED BY THE TERMS: ANGULAR, SUBANGULAR, SUBROUNDED, OR ROUNDED.</p>		<p>HARD ROCK IS NON-COASTAL PLAIN MATERIAL THAT WHEN TESTED, WOULD YIELD SPT REFUSAL. AN INFERRED ROCK LINE INDICATES THE LEVEL AT WHICH NON-COASTAL PLAIN MATERIAL WOULD YIELD SPT REFUSAL. SPT REFUSAL IS PENETRATION BY A SPLIT SPOON SAMPLER EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN 0.1 FOOT PER 60 BLOWS IN NON-COASTAL PLAIN MATERIAL. THE TRANSITION BETWEEN SOIL AND ROCK IS OFTEN REPRESENTED BY A ZONE OF WEATHERED ROCK.            ROCK MATERIALS ARE TYPICALLY DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS:</p>		<p><b>ALLUVIUM (ALLUV.)</b> - SOILS WHICH HAVE BEEN TRANSPORTED BY WATER.  <b>AQUIFER</b> - A WATER BEARING FORMATION OR STRATA.  <b>ARENACEOUS</b> - APPLIED TO ROCKS THAT HAVE BEEN DERIVED FROM SAND OR THAT CONTAIN SAND.  <b>ARGILLACEOUS</b> - APPLIED TO ALL ROCKS OR SUBSTANCES COMPOSED OF CLAY MINERALS, OR HAVING A NOTABLE PROPORTION OF CLAY IN THEIR COMPOSITION, AS SHALE, SLATE, ETC.  <b>ARTESIAN</b> - GROUND WATER THAT IS UNDER SUFFICIENT PRESSURE TO RISE ABOVE THE LEVEL AT WHICH IT IS ENCOUNTERED, BUT WHICH DOES NOT NECESSARILY RISE TO OR ABOVE THE GROUND SURFACE.  <b>CALCAREOUS (CALC.)</b> - SOILS WHICH CONTAIN APPRECIABLE AMOUNTS OF CALCIUM CARBONATE.  <b>COLLUVIUM</b> - ROCK FRAGMENTS MIXED WITH SOIL DEPOSITED BY GRAVITY ON SLOPE OR AT BOTTOM OF SLOPE.  <b>CORE RECOVERY (REC.)</b> - TOTAL LENGTH OF ALL MATERIAL RECOVERED IN THE CORE BARREL DIVIDED BY TOTAL LENGTH OF CORE RUN AND EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE.  <b>DIKE</b> - A TABULAR BODY OF IGNEOUS ROCK THAT CUTS ACROSS THE STRUCTURE OF ADJACENT ROCKS OR CUTS MASSIVE ROCK.  <b>DIP</b> - THE ANGLE AT WHICH A STRATUM OR ANY PLANAR FEATURE IS INCLINED FROM THE HORIZONTAL.  <b>DIP DIRECTION (DIP AZIMUTH)</b> - THE DIRECTION OR BEARING OF THE HORIZONTAL TRACE OF THE LINE OF DIP, MEASURED CLOCKWISE FROM NORTH.  <b>FAULT</b> - A FRACTURE OR FRACTURE ZONE ALONG WHICH THERE HAS BEEN DISPLACEMENT OF THE SIDES RELATIVE TO ONE ANOTHER PARALLEL TO THE FRACTURE.  <b>FISSILE</b> - A PROPERTY OF SPLITTING ALONG CLOSELY SPACED PARALLEL PLANES.  <b>FLOOD PLAIN (F.P.)</b> - LAND BORDERING A STREAM, BUILT OF SEDIMENTS DEPOSITED BY THE STREAM.  <b>FORMATION (FM.)</b> - A MAPPABLE GEOLOGIC UNIT THAT CAN BE RECOGNIZED AND TRACED IN THE FIELD.  <b>JOINT</b> - FRACTURE IN ROCK ALONG WHICH NO APPRECIABLE MOVEMENT HAS OCCURRED.  <b>LEDGE</b> - A SHELF-LIKE RIDGE OR PROJECTION OF ROCK WHOSE THICKNESS IS SMALL COMPARED TO ITS LATERAL EXTENT.  <b>LENS</b> - A BODY OF SOIL OR ROCK THAT THINS OUT IN ONE OR MORE DIRECTIONS.  <b>MOTTLED (MOT.)</b> - IRREGULARLY MARKED WITH SPOTS OF DIFFERENT COLORS. MOTTLING IN SOILS USUALLY INDICATES POOR AERATION AND LACK OF GOOD DRAINAGE.  <b>PERCHED WATER</b> - WATER MAINTAINED ABOVE THE NORMAL GROUND WATER LEVEL BY THE PRESENCE OF AN INTERVENING IMPERVIOUS STRATUM.  <b>RESIDUAL SOIL</b> - SOIL FORMED IN PLACE BY THE WEATHERING OF ROCK.  <b>ROCK QUALITY DESIGNATION (R.Q.D.)</b> - A MEASURE OF ROCK QUALITY DESCRIBED BY: TOTAL LENGTH OF ROCK SEGMENTS EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN 4 INCHES DIVIDED BY THE TOTAL LENGTH OF CORE RUN AND EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE.  <b>SAPROLITE (SAP.)</b> - RESIDUAL SOIL WHICH RETAINS THE RELIC STRUCTURE OR FABRIC OF THE PARENT ROCK.  <b>SILL</b> - AN INTRUSIVE BODY OF IGNEOUS ROCK OF APPROXIMATELY UNIFORM THICKNESS AND RELATIVELY THIN COMPARED WITH ITS LATERAL EXTENT, WHICH HAS BEEN REPLACED PARALLEL TO THE BEDDING OR SCHISTOSITY OF THE INTRUDED ROCKS.  <b>SLICKENSIDE</b> - POLISHED AND STRIATED SURFACE THAT RESULTS FROM FRICTION ALONG A FAULT OR SLIP PLANE.  <b>STANDARD PENETRATION TEST (PENETRATION RESISTANCE) (SPT)</b> - NUMBER OF BLOWS (N OR B.P.F.) OF A 140 LB. HAMMER FALLING 30 INCHES REQUIRED TO PRODUCE A PENETRATION OF 1 FOOT INTO SOIL WITH A 2 INCH OUTSIDE DIAMETER SPLIT SPOON SAMPLER. SPT REFUSAL IS LESS THAN 0.1 FOOT PENETRATION WITH 60 BLOWS.  <b>STRATA CORE RECOVERY (SREC.)</b> - TOTAL LENGTH OF STRATA MATERIAL RECOVERED DIVIDED BY TOTAL LENGTH OF STRATUM AND EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE.  <b>STRATA ROCK QUALITY DESIGNATION (S.R.Q.D.)</b> - A MEASURE OF ROCK QUALITY DESCRIBED BY: TOTAL LENGTH OF ROCK SEGMENTS WITHIN A STRATUM EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN 4 INCHES DIVIDED BY THE TOTAL LENGTH OF STRATA AND EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE.  <b>TOPSOIL (T.S.)</b> - SURFACE SOILS USUALLY CONTAINING ORGANIC MATTER.</p>																																																																												
<p><b>SOIL LEGEND AND AASHTO CLASSIFICATION</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>GENERAL CLASS.</th> <th>GRANULAR MATERIALS (≤ 35% PASSING #200)</th> <th>SILT-CLAY MATERIALS (&gt; 35% PASSING #200)</th> <th>ORGANIC MATERIALS</th> </tr> <tr> <td>GROUP CLASS.</td> <td>A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5, A-6, A-7</td> <td>A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5, A-6, A-7</td> <td>A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5, A-6, A-7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SYMBOL</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>% PASSING</td> <td>50 MX, 30 MX, 15 MX, 10 MX, 5 MX</td> <td>10 MX, 5 MX, 2 MX, 1 MX</td> <td>10 MX, 5 MX, 2 MX, 1 MX</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LIQUID LIMIT</td> <td>6 MX, N.P.</td> <td>40 MX, 30 MX, 20 MX, 15 MX, 10 MX, 5 MX</td> <td>40 MX, 30 MX, 20 MX, 15 MX, 10 MX, 5 MX</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GROUP INDEX</td> <td>0</td> <td>0, 4 MX, 8 MX, 12 MX, 16 MX, 20 MX</td> <td>0, 4 MX, 8 MX, 12 MX, 16 MX, 20 MX</td> </tr> <tr> <td>USUAL TYPES OF MAJOR MATERIALS</td> <td>STONE FRAGS. 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ARE USED IN DESCRIPTIONS WHENEVER THEY ARE CONSIDERED OF SIGNIFICANCE.</p> <p><b>COMPRESSIBILITY</b>            SLIGHTLY COMPRESSIBLE            MODERATELY COMPRESSIBLE            HIGHLY COMPRESSIBLE</p> <p><b>PERCENTAGE OF MATERIAL</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>ORGANIC MATERIAL</th> <th>GRANULAR SOILS</th> <th>SILT-CLAY SOILS</th> <th>OTHER MATERIAL</th> </tr> <tr> <td>TRACE OF ORGANIC MATTER</td> <td>2 - 3%</td> <td>3 - 5%</td> <td>TRACE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LITTLE ORGANIC MATTER</td> <td>3 - 5%</td> <td>5 - 12%</td> <td>LITTLE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MODERATELY ORGANIC</td> <td>5 - 10%</td> <td>12 - 20%</td> <td>SOME</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HIGHLY ORGANIC</td> <td>&gt;10%</td> <td>&gt;20%</td> <td>HIGHLY</td> </tr> </table>		ORGANIC MATERIAL	GRANULAR SOILS	SILT-CLAY SOILS	OTHER MATERIAL	TRACE OF ORGANIC MATTER	2 - 3%	3 - 5%	TRACE	LITTLE ORGANIC MATTER	3 - 5%	5 - 12%	LITTLE	MODERATELY ORGANIC	5 - 10%	12 - 20%	SOME	HIGHLY ORGANIC	>10%	>20%	HIGHLY	<p><b>WEATHERING</b></p> <p>FRESH            ROCK FRESH, CRYSTALS BRIGHT, FEW JOINTS MAY SHOW SLIGHT STAINING. ROCK RINGS UNDER HAMMER IF CRYSTALLINE.</p> <p>VERY SLIGHT (V. SL.)            CRYSTALS ON A BROKEN SPECIMEN FACE SHINE BRIGHTLY. ROCK RINGS UNDER HAMMER BLOWS IF OF A CRYSTALLINE NATURE.</p> <p>SLIGHT (SL.)            ROCK GENERALLY FRESH, JOINTS STAINED AND DISCOLORATION EXTENDS INTO ROCK UP TO 1 INCH. OPEN JOINTS MAY CONTAIN CLAY. IN GRANITOID ROCKS SOME OCCASIONAL FELDSPAR CRYSTALS ARE DULL AND DISCOLORED. CRYSTALLINE ROCKS RING UNDER HAMMER BLOWS.</p> <p>MODERATE (MOD.)            SIGNIFICANT PORTIONS OF ROCK SHOW DISCOLORATION AND WEATHERING EFFECTS. IN GRANITOID ROCKS, MOST FELDSPARS ARE DULL AND DISCOLORED, SOME SHOW CLAY. ROCK HAS DULL SOUND UNDER HAMMER BLOWS AND SHOWS SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF STRENGTH AS COMPARED WITH FRESH ROCK.</p> <p>MODERATELY SEVERE (MOD. SEV.)            ALL ROCK EXCEPT QUARTZ DISCOLORED OR STAINED. IN GRANITOID ROCKS, ALL FELDSPARS DULL AND DISCOLORED AND A MAJORITY SHOW KAOLINIZATION. ROCK SHOWS SEVERE LOSS OF STRENGTH AND CAN BE EXCAVATED WITH A GEOLOGIST'S PICK. ROCK GIVES "CLUNK" SOUND WHEN STRUCK. IF TESTED, WOULD YIELD SPT REFUSAL.</p> <p>SEVERE (SEV.)            ALL ROCKS EXCEPT QUARTZ DISCOLORED OR STAINED. ROCK FABRIC CLEAR AND EVIDENT BUT REDUCED IN STRENGTH TO STRONG SOIL. IN GRANITOID ROCKS ALL FELDSPARS ARE KAOLINIZED TO SOME EXTENT. SOME FRAGMENTS OF STRONG ROCK USUALLY REMAIN. IF TESTED, YIELDS SPT N VALUES &gt; 100 BPF.</p> <p>VERY SEVERE (V. SEV.)            ALL ROCK EXCEPT QUARTZ DISCOLORED OR STAINED. ROCK FABRIC ELEMENTS ARE DISCERNIBLE BUT THE MASS IS EFFECTIVELY REDUCED TO SOIL STATUS, WITH ONLY FRAGMENTS OF STRONG ROCK REMAINING. SAPROLITE IS AN EXAMPLE OF ROCK WEATHERED TO A DEGREE SUCH THAT ONLY MINOR VESTIGES OF THE ORIGINAL ROCK FABRIC REMAIN. IF TESTED, YIELDS SPT N VALUES &lt; 100 BPF.</p> <p>COMPLETE            ROCK REDUCED TO SOIL. ROCK FABRIC NOT DISCERNIBLE, OR DISCERNIBLE ONLY IN SMALL AND SCATTERED CONCENTRATIONS. QUARTZ MAY BE PRESENT AS DIKES OR STRINGERS. SAPROLITE IS ALSO AN EXAMPLE.</p>																										
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