



# TECHNICAL BULLETIN

**TO:** JEFFERSON COUNTY CONTRACTORS AND DEVELOPERS

**FROM:** CRAIG BURGARD, CODE ENFORCEMENT MANAGER/BUILDING OFFICIAL

**RE:** TECHNICAL BULLETIN 2024-01 - FILL AROUND FOUNDATIONS CODE SECTION IBC 1804.3 & 1804.7

**DATE:** JANUARY 23, 2024

**SUBJECT & PURPOSE:** *Fill Around Foundations; Clarify acceptable "Clean Fill" as it pertains to backfill around foundations and requirements affecting the 2015 International Building Code (IBC) Chapter 18 Sections 1804.3 "Placement of backfill" and 1804.7 "Controlled low-strength material (CLSM)" as adopted in the Jefferson County Code.*

**ISSUE:** Increasing occurrences of backfill being used that is not code compliant that risk the stability and integrity of the foundation and other building components.

**AUTHORITY:** Director of County Services and Code Enforcement.

**NOTIFICATION:** This Technical Bulletin focuses on what constitutes clean fill in backfill that aids in creating proper drainage and provides stability for the foundation. Specifically per the International Building Code (IBC) 2015 Section 1804.3, *"The excavation outside the foundation shall be backfilled with soil that is free of organic materials, construction debris, cobbles and boulders or with a controlled low-strength material (CLSM)."*

**APPROVED BACKFILL:** Clean soil, sand, gravel or a mixture or CLSM.

**NON-APPROVED BACKFILL:** Fine grained soils (such as clays) because they tend to accumulate moisture, susceptible to swelling, shrinking and frost action. Organic materials, construction debris, or large rocks, "Cobble" or "Boulders". Cobbles are defined as 2.5"-10.1" (64mm-256mm) rock. Boulders are defined as 10.1" and greater rock. No backfill components shall be larger than 2.5" in diameter.



**UNACCEPTABLE BACKFILL -  
INSPECTION FAILED BACKFILL**



**ACCEPTABLE BACKFILL**  
*Photo credit - theconstructor.org*