

# Comprehensive Update of the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines and Ventura County CEQA Implementation Manual

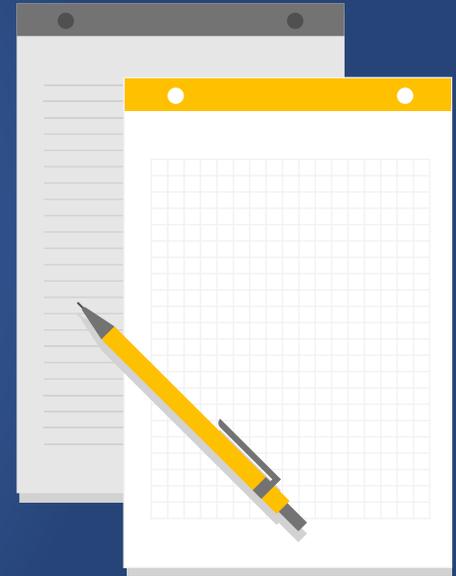


Resource Management Agency, Planning Division

# Presentation Overview



- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines
  - Implementation of General Plan Programs
- County CEQA Implementation Manual
- Next Steps
- Q&A Session



# California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)



- Enacted in 1970
- Requires public agencies to evaluate impacts of a project on the environment
- Requires that projects reduce adverse effects on the environment
- Informs the public and decision makers on the effects of the projects
- Encourages public agencies to develop thresholds of significance to use in determining the significance of environmental effects (*CEQA Guidelines §15064.7*)

# Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines (ISAGs)



- Used to evaluate private development and County projects that are subject to CEQA
- Projects are evaluated for potentially significant impacts on the environment
- “Threshold criteria” and a “methodology” section help determine a project’s level of impact
- Provide a consistent and objective tool to identify potential impacts

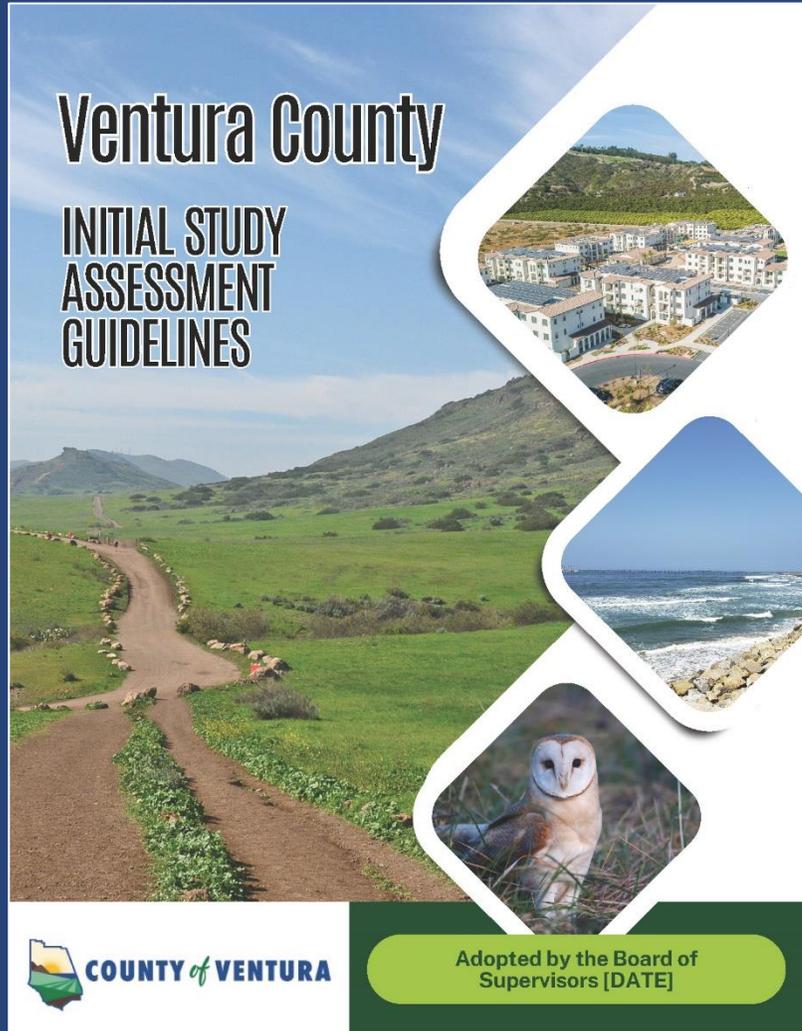
## INITIAL STUDY ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES



April 26, 2011

Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines

# Key Updates to Initial Study Assessment Guidelines



- Align more closely with Appendix G in the State CEQA Guidelines
- Consolidated/reorganized issue areas (60 to 25)
- Consolidated/updated thresholds of significance and related impact analysis guidelines
- Updated references to more recently adopted federal, state, and local policies
- Incorporated 2040 General Plan policy and program requirements

# Incorporation of General Plan Policies & Programs



General Plan policies and programs incorporated into the ISAGs:

AG-1.8

AG-O

COS-4.7

COS-FF

COS-GG

COS-HH

COS-II

COS-JJ

COS-KK

CTM-B

HAZ-9.2

HAZ-CC

HAZ-Y

HAZ-Z

# Example of a Consolidated Issue Area



## Existing ISAGs

Fault Rupture

Ground Shaking

Liquefaction

Seiche and Tsunami

Landslide/Mudflow

Expansive Soils

Subsidence

## Updated ISAGs

Geological Hazards

Reduced redundancy in similar thresholds & analysis guidelines

Updated thresholds to align with Appendix G in CEQA

Moved General Plan consistency analysis to Land Use section

Moved definitions of terms to a new Glossary

# Example of a Consolidated Issue Area



## Existing ISAGs

## Updated ISAGs

10. Fault Rupture

11. Ground Shaking

12. Liquefaction Hazards

13. Seiche and Tsunami Hazards

14. Landslide/Mudflow

15. Expansive Soils Hazards

16. Subsidence Hazard

**A. Definition of Issue**

**15. Expansive Soils Hazards**

**A. Definition of Issue**

**General**

Expansive soils are primarily clay-rich soils subject to changes in volume with changes in moisture content. The resultant shrinking and swelling of soils can influence all fixed structures, utilities and roadways. Included within the definition of expansive soils are certain bedrock formations with expansive rock strata and weathered horizons.

In addition, as expansive soil on sloping ground expands and contracts, it tends to move down slope in response to gravity.

**Ventura County Specific**

Historically, expansive soils have caused considerable damage in Ventura County. In the early 1990s numerous homes were razed and many more were severely damaged in the Shallow Oaks Tract, adjacent to the City of Thousand Oaks. Since the initial damage in the 1990s, engineering studies have resulted in design techniques and procedures that provide for safe and economical construction on expansive soils. Local building ordinances have incorporated these techniques and procedures. This has allowed construction even in areas where the hazard is severe. Expansive soils are present throughout most areas of Ventura County, including both level and hilly terrain. They are present in some areas in thick accumulations and in others as a thin cover. Beaches, sea cliffs, bare rock and active stream channels are usually free of expansive soil accumulations. Expansive soil hazards are assessed and mitigated within the existing regulatory framework of both the Public Works Agency and the Building and Safety Department. As such, an expansive soil hazard is considered to exist where soils with an expansion index greater than 20 are present.

**B. Applicable General Plan Goals and Policies**

The following goals and policies of the Ventura County General Plan are applicable to this issue:

**Countywide Goals, Policies and Programs:**

Goal 2.6.1  
Policies 2.6.2-1 through -3

**Coastal Area Plan:**

**Coastal Act – Hazards:** Goal 3.1.1  
§ 30253 Policies 3.1.2-1 through 7

**North Coast – Hazards**

Objective Goal 2.1.1  
Policies 1 through 4 Policies 2.1.2-1 through -4

**Central Coast - Hazards**

Objective Goal 2.1.1-1  
Policies 1, 3 & 3 through 5 Policies 2.1.2-1 & -2

**South Coast - Hazards**

Objective Goal 2.1.1  
Policies 1 through 4 Policies 2.1.2-1 through -4

**C. Threshold of Significance Criteria**

The determination of a significant soils expansion effect shall be based upon an inquiry of whether a proposed project will expose people or structures to potential adverse effects, including the risk of loss.

Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines  
95

Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines

## 21. Geological Hazards

### 21.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

#### 21.1.1 Fault Rupture

A fault is a shear or zone of closely associated shears across which earth materials on one side have been displaced with respect to those on the other side because of tectonic forces. A fault is distinguished from those fractures or shears caused by landsliding or other gravity-driven surficial failures. Fault rupture hazards primarily exist along pre-existing faults. These faults are considered to pose a hazard if they have moved within a specific recent period of time. This period depends upon the type of project. For almost all projects, the period of interest is the past 11,000 to 12,000 years. For the siting of critically hazardous facilities, such as atomic power plants, fault activity over longer periods of time needs to be considered. Section 11.1 of the Ventura County General Plan Background Report ("Background Report") provides additional information on major faults located in Ventura County, which are also mapped in Figure 11-1 in Section 11.1 of the Background Report and *County View* and the Ventura County *Resource Management Agency Geographic Information System (RMA GIS) Viewer*.

#### 21.1.2 Ground Shaking

Ground shaking hazards are ubiquitous throughout Ventura County and are addressed in the Ventura County Building Code. Ground shaking hazard areas are areas expected to experience intense ground shaking during a maximum probable earthquake.

The potential for the highest amplification of ground shaking occurs in the Oxnard Plain and the Santa Clara River Valley in the south half of the County, and in the Lockwood, Cuyama, and Cuddy Valleys in the north half. Additional information on ground shaking hazards specific to Ventura County is provided in Section 11.1 of the Background Report.

#### 21.1.3 Liquefaction

Liquefaction can result in settling of roadways, rupture of underground pipelines and cables, and shifting of building foundations. As foundations lose support, buildings and other objects on the ground surface can settle, tilt, and collapse. Lightweight buried structures can float to the surface. Four types of failure commonly result from liquefaction:

- Lateral spreading:** Lateral movement in a fractured mass of rock or soil, which result from liquefaction or flow of subjacent materials. Commonly developed adjacent to channels and riverbanks on slopes between 0.3 and 3 degrees. Movements are commonly several feet, although displacements up to several tens of feet are possible.
- Flow failure:** Occurs where liquefied soil is present on an original slope usually greater than 3 degrees. Liquefied soil and blocks of solid ground are often displaced many tens of feet at speeds up to several tens of miles per hour and can produce catastrophic effects. Almost all human-made structures are susceptible to damage by flow slides.

21.1 // Geological Hazards Proposed Draft, April 2025

New look and feel

New global glossary

Resources & References

Updated headers

# Consolidated Issue Areas

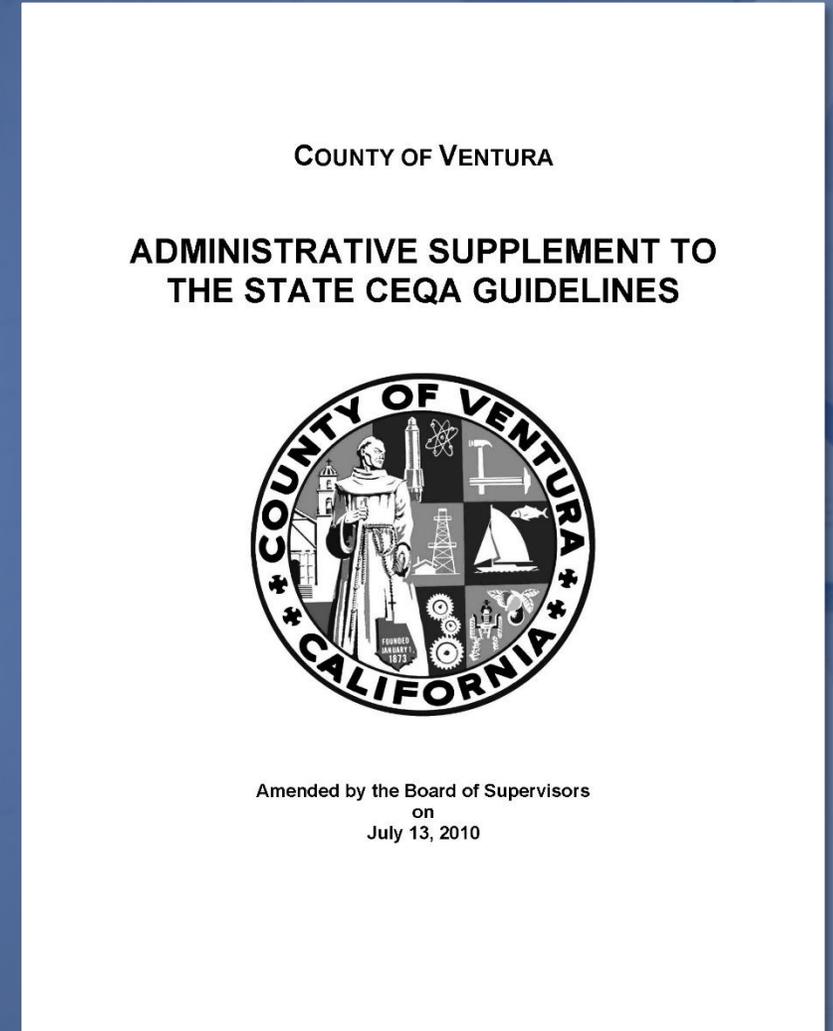


Agriculture & Forestry 1	Air Quality 2	Greenhouse Gases 3	<b>Energy</b> 4	Biological Resources 5
Hydrology 6	Beaches and Coastal Sand Dunes 7	Water Resources 8	Paleontological Resources 9	Mineral Resources 10
Aesthetics 11	Historical Resources 12	Archaeological Resources 13	<b>Tribal Cultural Resources</b> 14	Land Use and Planning 15
Population and Housing 16	Recreation 17	Aviation Hazards 18	Noise and Vibration 19	Geological Hazards 20
Wildfire Hazards 21	Hazardous Materials and Waste 22	Public Services 23	Utilities and Service Systems 24	Transportation 25

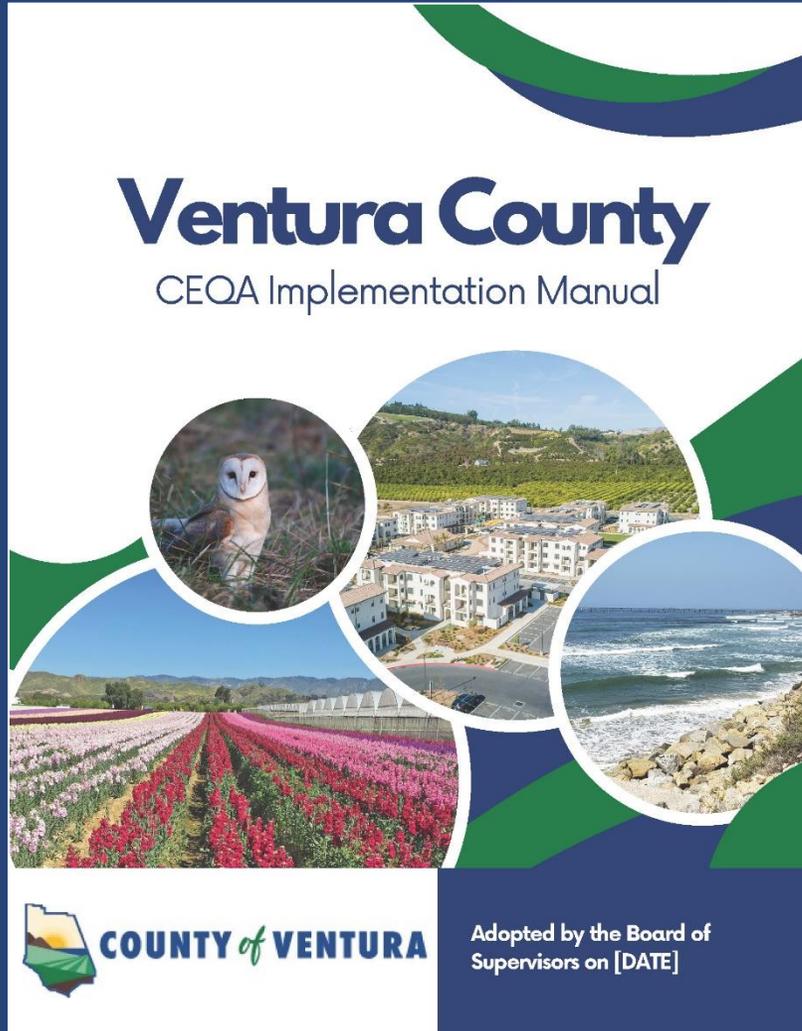
# Ventura County CEQA Implementation Manual



- Currently called the “Administrative Supplement to the State CEQA Guidelines”
- Last amended in 2010
- Identifies specific procedures for County Agencies to implement and comply with CEQA requirements
- Includes roles and responsibilities of certain County agencies



# Key Updates to CEQA Implementation Manual



- Eliminated references to the Environmental Quality Assessment Committee (EQAC)
  - CEO, RMA Director, PWA Director, and County Counsel
- Clarified use of tiering and exemptions allowed under CEQA
- Updated process to amend the document
- Added a Reference Library of County and State resources for CEQA

# Next Steps



## 30-Day Review

APRIL 24 through MAY 24

View documents online or at  
the Government Center



## Open House

MAY 7

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Museum of Ventura County



## Public Hearings

Later this year

Planning Commission  
Board of Supervisors



# Updated Documents



**Ventura County**  
**INITIAL STUDY  
ASSESSMENT  
GUIDELINES**

**COUNTY of VENTURA**

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors [DATE]

**Ventura County**  
CEQA Implementation Manual

**COUNTY of VENTURA**

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors on [DATE]

**COUNTY of VENTURA**

**NOISE AND VIBRATION  
ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES**

Adopted November 2005  
Amended July 2010  
Amended [DATE]

*Proposed Draft, April 2025*

# Summary Sheets



Questions?  
Email [isags@ventura.org](mailto:isags@ventura.org)  
Call (805) 654-5037

Learn more about the ISAGs:  
Scan the QR code, or visit:  
[rma.venturacounty.gov/isags](http://rma.venturacounty.gov/isags)



## What Changed?

### Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines (ISAGs)

The ISAGs provide a framework that helps the County of Ventura determine whether a project could have a potentially significant effect on the environment. The County is conducting a comprehensive update of the ISAGs to better align with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which includes the key components below.

#### LOOK AND FEEL

Text Format  
Defined Terms  
Section Headings

#### NEW FEATURES

Glossary  
Resources & References  
In each topic section



60 topic sections were consolidated into 25 topic sections to more closely align with CEQA's policies and Appendix G.

Each section contains the following overall updates:

#### Technical Terms

Have been updated and are found in the new Glossary

#### General Plan Consistency

is now discussed in Section 16, Land Use & Planning

#### Thresholds of Significance

have been updated to better align with CEQA

#### Analysis Guidelines

have been updated to better align with thresholds

Apr. 2025

### Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines (ISAGs) – What Changed?

## Overview of ISAG Topic Areas

The following County agencies/departments, as well as the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, will be responsible for reviewing specific sections of the ISAGs as marked below, making determinations of environmental significance on a project-by-project basis, and evaluating the technical adequacy of environmental documents for their assigned topic sections.

Environmental Issue / ISAG Section	County Agency/Department											
	Agriculture/Weights & Measures	County Executive Office Sustainability Division	Department of Airports	Fire Protection District	General Services Agency	Library Services	Public Works Agency	Watershed Protection District	RMA Environmental Health Division	RMA Planning Division	Sheriff's Office	Ventura County Air Pollution Control District
1. Introduction												
2. Agriculture & Forestry	●											
3. Air Quality												●
4. Greenhouse Gases												●
5. Energy		●										
6. Biological Resources											●	
7. Hydrology							●	●				
8. Beaches and Coastal Sand Dunes											●	
9. Water Resources								●				
10. Paleontological Resources								●				
11. Mineral Resources											●	
12. Aesthetics											●	
13. Historical Resources											●	
14. Archaeological Resources											●	
15. Tribal Cultural Resources											●	
16. Land Use & Planning			●								●	
17. Population & Housing											●	
18. Recreation						●						
19. Aviation Hazards			●									
20. Noise & Vibration											●	
21. Geologic Hazards								●				
22. Wildfire Hazards				●								
23. Hazardous Materials & Waste									●			
24. Public Services					●		●				●	
25. Utilities & Service Systems				●	●				●			
26. Transportation			●	●				●				

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### Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines (ISAGs) – What Changed?

## 3. Air Quality

### Overview

This section specifies significance thresholds for air quality impacts, including emission limits on reactive organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen, cumulative increases in criteria pollutants, and exposure of sensitive receptors to pollutants such as, but not limited to, toxic air contaminants, dust, and odors. It also provides guidelines for mitigating construction-related dust and emissions, managing carbon monoxide hotspots, and addressing odor impacts.

This topic section is updated from **Section 1, Air Quality** in the existing ISAGs.

### Thresholds of Significance

Impact analysis guidelines (formerly referred to as "Methodology") were updated accordingly to better align with the following updated thresholds.

A project may have a significant impact if it would:

**AIR-1** Exceed 2 pounds per day or greater for reactive organic compounds or oxides of nitrogen, as described in the Air Quality Assessment Guidelines, and cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Air Quality Management Plan.

**AIR-3** Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations such as, but not limited to, toxic air contaminants, dust, and odors.

**AIR-2** Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of a *criteria pollutant* for which the region is in non-attainment of the applicable federal or state standard.

#### Legend:

- Derived from standards specific to the County
- Derived from Appendix G of CEQA
- Derived from a combination of specific County standards and Appendix G of CEQA

### Related Technical Terms

The following technical terms related to this topic section have been updated or incorporated:

- Air Quality Assessment Guidelines
- Air Quality Management Plan
- Criteria pollutants
- Mobile source
- Nonattainment area
- Oxides of nitrogen
- Ozone
- Ozone precursors
- Particulate matter
- Reactive organic compounds
- Sensitive receptors
- Stationary sources
- Toxic air contaminant

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# Questions?



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