

Foundation Footings for a Backyard Shed

In California, the building codes that regulate foundation footings for backyard sheds can vary depending on the specific local jurisdiction and the size of the shed. However, here are some general guidelines based on common California building codes:



Permit Requirements

- Sheds under 120 square feet typically do not require a building permit, but this can vary by locality[1].
- Larger sheds or those with electrical or plumbing may require permits.

Foundation Types

For small backyard sheds, two common foundation types are allowed:

1. Slab-on-grade
2. Raised floor with footings

Footing Requirements

Depth

- The minimum depth for footings is generally 12 inches below undisturbed ground surface[2].
- In areas prone to frost, footings must extend below the frost line.

Width

- The minimum width for footings is typically 12 inches[2].

Reinforcement

- For basic shed foundations, footings are often required to be reinforced with steel rebar.
- A common requirement is two #4 rebar at the top and two #4 rebar at the bottom of the footing[2].

Concrete Specifications

- The minimum concrete strength required is usually 2,500 psi, but 4,500 psi is often recommended for better durability[1][3].
- Type V cement is commonly specified for better resistance to soil conditions.

Site Considerations

- The ground should slope away from the foundation at a minimum 10% grade for at least 10 feet to ensure proper drainage[4].
- In some cases, a 5% slope may be acceptable if combined with other water diversion methods.

Special Conditions

- In areas with expansive soils or liquefaction risks, additional measures may be required.
- For sheds larger than 500 square feet in liquefaction-prone areas, 4 feet of over-excavation might be necessary[1].

It's important to note that these are general guidelines, and specific requirements can vary significantly between different cities and counties in California. Always check with your local building department for the exact requirements in your area before starting construction.

Citations:

[1] <https://www.lakeforestca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-05/2022%20REV-%20Foundation%20Requirements.pdf>

[2] <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/SantaClarita/html/SantaClarita18/SantaClarita1806.html>

[3] <https://ocds.ocpublicworks.com/sites/ocpwoocds/files/2021-06/FoundationResidentialProjectsStructures.pdf>

[4] <https://www.thespruce.com/foundation-footings-code-basics-1822269>

[5] <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/73769/Processing-of-Urban-Housing-Developments-and-Urban-Lot-Split-Parcel-Maps-PDF>

[6] <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/PleasantHill/html/PleasantHill18/PleasantHill1820.html>

[7] <https://www.thebuildingcodeforum.com/forum/threads/two-story-slab-on-grade-foundation-footing-in-california.31608/>

[8] <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/39060/Montalvin-Manor-P-1-Development-guidelines>

