

GEO notes

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NEWS and Information for the Construction Industry

We are pleased to introduce our first newsletter to inform you on new developments. Your feedback is welcome. **Thanks to all of our clients, friends, and colleagues for your support** as we begin our fifth year. We continue to add technical staff and service areas. **Our expanded technical service areas** include asbestos surveys, automated geotechnical instrumentation, environmental assessment and remediation. These services complement our core discipline of geotechnical engineering.

How to Avoid Buried Surprises

Buried unknowns can have significant design and cost implications for new construction. Most prime real estate available in our urban areas has been developed or has been impacted by adjacent development. More than 200 years of building has left many sites disturbed, filled or significantly altered.

Old fill means abandoned foundations, utilities, buried unsuitable soils and unknown quality backfill. Development often means digging new foundations through old fill. The risks include foundation settlement, differing site condition claims and disposal of debris or contaminated materials.

Surprises can be minimized with a review of site history, old building plans, utility plans, published aerial photos, and an adequate subsurface exploration program. A subsurface program may include test pits and continuous sampling through the fill layer. Sometimes a brief discussion with an "old-timer" familiar with the site is helpful. What may seem like "extra" cost and time to obtain data during design frequently proves invaluable at the time of bidding and construction.



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