Landslide/Mudslide

Landslide is a general term for a falling mass of soil or rocks, or vertical movement of small pieces of soil. "Mudslide" (mudflow) is a flow of very wet rock and soil. The primary effects of mudslides/landslides can include:

- Abrupt depression and lateral displacement of hillside surfaces over distances of up to several hundreds of feet
- Disruption of surface drainage
- Blockage of flood control channels and roadways
- Displacement or destruction of improvements such as roadways, buildings, and water wells

There are numerous areas within Orange County that are susceptible to landslides and mud slides. Recent cases of landslides occurred in Anaheim Hills and Mission Viejo following the rain storms of 2005 and the Bluebird Landslides in Laguna Beach that same year. Most, but not all, landslides in southern California begin to move when the soils have become saturated during heavy rains. In Anaheim Hills, several homes located at the crest of the hill began to slide and had to be evacuated. These structures were deemed unsafe for continued habitation. The Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Report produced by OES identified specific areas as high risk for landslides, mudflows and debris movement due to the burn areas of the Santiago Wildfires in 2007.

Almost all sites with potential for mudslides/landslides lie within the hillside and coastal areas of Orange County. Many slopes in the County are only marginally stable, and landslides could occur. OCPW enforces Chapter 70 (excavation and grading) of the Uniform Building Code to ensure that areas of landslide or hillside areas are adequately identified and investigated prior to development.