

**CHAPTER 16  
STRUCTURAL DESIGN**

**SECTION 1610.2  
IBC Interpretation No. 03-04  
2000 Edition  
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**1610.2 Retaining walls.** Retaining walls shall be designed to ensure stability against overturning, sliding, excessive foundation pressure and water uplift. Retaining walls shall be designed for a safety factor of 1.5 against lateral sliding and overturning.

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**Q:** Retaining walls must be designed to resist lateral soil loads, and the design must include a safety factor of 1.5 against lateral sliding and overturning. Is the design safety factor of 1.5 required to be applied to retaining walls for seismic loads?

**A:** No. Section 1610, which includes Section 1610.1 and Section 1610.2, establishes the minimum design requirements for basement walls and retaining walls with regards to lateral soil loads. Retaining walls subject to seismic loads must comply with seismic design provisions addressed elsewhere in the referenced *International Building Code*.

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