



Eastleigh building collapse

Geological, geophysical engineering and geotechnical investigations for safe construction

The Geological Society of Kenya (GSK) expresses its deep sorrow following the recent building collapse in Eastleigh, Nairobi, and the reported loss of lives. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, wish those injured a full recovery, and stand in solidarity with all those affected. We also acknowledge the dedication of emergency responders and volunteers supporting the affected community.

As we await the findings of investigations into the cause of the collapse, GSK emphasises the essential role of geological, engineering geophysical and geotechnical investigations in safe building and infrastructure development.

Geological investigations characterise soils, rocks and groundwater, and identify potential ground hazards. Engineering geophysical investigations map subsurface variations and anomalies that may indicate cavities, fractured zones or changes in bedrock depth. Geotechnical investigations assess ground strength, bearing capacity and settlement characteristics. An integrated interpretation of these findings supports foundation design, safe excavation, protection of neighbouring structures and the appropriate location of boreholes and field tests.

Ground conditions can vary over short distances. Each development therefore requires a site-specific investigation proportionate to its scale, loads and ground risks. Findings from neighbouring plots should not substitute for that assessment. Construction conditions must be checked against design assumptions.

Under paragraph 85(4) of the National Building Code, 2024, foundation design for buildings of more than four storeys must be preceded by a geotechnical report. GSK calls for effective implementation of this requirement and recommends clearer guidance on the roles of geological and engineering geophysical investigations. Such guidance should define professional responsibilities and ensure that the scope of investigation reflects site risks and the consequences of failure, including for smaller developments.

Safe construction also depends on sound structural design, quality materials, competent supervision and effective regulatory oversight. GSK calls for coordinated work among geoscientists, engineers, architects, developers and regulators. The Society remains available for consultation and to facilitate access to relevant specialist expertise in support of safer development.

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