Best Management Practices

For

Erosion Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Management Practice</th>
<th>EC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>EC-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation of Exiting Vegetation</td>
<td>EC-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydraulic Mulch</td>
<td>EC-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydroseeding</td>
<td>EC-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil Binders</td>
<td>EC-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw Mulch</td>
<td>EC-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geotextiles and Mats</td>
<td>EC-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Mulching</td>
<td>EC-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Dikes and Drainage Swales</td>
<td>EC-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velocity Dissipation Devices</td>
<td>EC-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slope Drains</td>
<td>EC-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streambank Stabilization</td>
<td>EC-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compost Blankets</td>
<td>EC-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil Roughening</td>
<td>EC-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-vegetation Stabilization</td>
<td>EC-16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description and Purpose
Scheduling is the development of a written plan that includes sequencing of construction activities and the implementation of BMPs such as erosion control and sediment control while taking local climate (rainfall, wind, etc.) into consideration. The purpose is to reduce the amount and duration of soil exposed to erosion by wind, rain, runoff, and vehicle tracking, and to perform the construction activities and control practices in accordance with the planned schedule.

Suitable Applications
Proper sequencing of construction activities to reduce erosion potential should be incorporated into the schedule of every construction project especially during rainy season. Use of other, more costly yet less effective, erosion and sediment control BMPs may often be reduced through proper construction sequencing.

Limitations
- Environmental constraints such as nesting season prohibitions reduce the full capabilities of this BMP.

Implementation
- Avoid rainy periods. Schedule major grading operations during dry months when practical. Allow enough time before rainfall begins to stabilize the soil with vegetation or physical means or to install sediment trapping devices.
- Plan the project and develop a schedule showing each phase
of construction. Clearly show how the rainy season relates to soil disturbing and restabilization activities. Incorporate the construction schedule into the SWFPP.

- Include on the schedule, details on the rainy season implementation and deployment of:
  - Erosion control BMPs
  - Sediment control BMPs
  - Tracking control BMPs
  - Wind erosion control BMPs
  - Non-stormwater BMPs
  - Waste management and materials pollution control BMPs

- Include dates for activities that may require non-stormwater discharges such as dewatering, sawcutting, grinding, drilling, boring, crushing, blasting, painting, hydro-demolition, mortar mixing, pavement cleaning, etc.

- Work out the sequencing and timetable for the start and completion of each item such as site clearing and grubbing, grading, excavation, paving, foundation pouring, utilities installation, etc., to minimize the active construction area during the rainy season.
  - Sequence trenching activities so that most open portions are closed before new trenching begins.
  - Incorporate staged seeding and re-vegetation of graded slopes as work progresses.
  - Schedule establishment of permanent vegetation during appropriate planting time for specified vegetation.

- Non-active areas should be stabilized as soon as practical after the cessation of soil disturbing activities or one day prior to the onset of precipitation.

- Monitor the weather forecast for rainfall.

- When rainfall is predicted, adjust the construction schedule to allow the implementation of soil stabilization and sediment treatment controls on all disturbed areas prior to the onset of rain.

- Be prepared year round to deploy erosion control and sediment control BMPs. Erosion may be caused during dry seasons by un-seasonal rainfall, wind, and vehicle tracking. Keep the site stabilized year round, and retain and maintain rainy season sediment trapping devices in operational condition.

- Apply permanent erosion control to areas deemed substantially complete during the project’s defined seeding window.

**Costs**

Construction scheduling to reduce erosion may increase other construction costs due to reduced economies of scale in performing site grading. The cost effectiveness of scheduling techniques should be compared with the other less effective erosion and sedimentation controls to achieve a cost effective balance.
Scheduling

Inspection and Maintenance

- Verify that work is progressing in accordance with the schedule. If progress deviates, take corrective actions.

- Amend the schedule when changes are warranted.

- Amend the schedule prior to the rainy season to show updated information on the deployment and implementation of construction site BMPs.

References


Preservation Of Existing Vegetation  EC-2

Description and Purpose
Carefully planned preservation of existing vegetation minimizes the potential of removing or injuring existing trees, vines, shrubs, and grasses that protect soil from erosion.

Suitable Applications
Preservation of existing vegetation is suitable for use on most projects. Large project sites often provide the greatest opportunity for use of this BMP. Suitable applications include the following:

- Areas within the site where no construction activity occurs, or occurs at a later date. This BMP is especially suitable to multi year projects where grading can be phased.

- Areas where natural vegetation exists and is designated for preservation. Such areas often include steep slopes, watercourse, and building sites in wooded areas.

- Areas where local, state, and federal government require preservation, such as vernal pools, wetlands, marshes, certain oak trees, etc. These areas are usually designated on the plans, or in the specifications, permits, or environmental documents.

- Where vegetation designated for ultimate removal can be temporarily preserved and be utilized for erosion control and sediment control.

Limitations
- Requires forward planning by the owner/developer,
contractor, and design staff.

- Limited opportunities for use when project plans do not incorporate existing vegetation into the site design.

- For sites with diverse topography, it is often difficult and expensive to save existing trees while grading the site satisfactory for the planned development.

**Implementation**

The best way to prevent erosion is to not disturb the land. In order to reduce the impacts of new development and redevelopment, projects may be designed to avoid disturbing land in sensitive areas of the site (e.g., natural watercourses, steep slopes), and to incorporate unique or desirable existing vegetation into the site's landscaping plan. Clearly marking and leaving a buffer area around these unique areas during construction will help to preserve these areas as well as take advantage of natural erosion prevention and sediment trapping.

Existing vegetation to be preserved on the site must be protected from mechanical and other injury while the land is being developed. The purpose of protecting existing vegetation is to ensure the survival of desirable vegetation for shade, beautification, and erosion control. Mature vegetation has extensive root systems that help to hold soil in place, thus reducing erosion. In addition, vegetation helps keep soil from drying rapidly and becoming susceptible to erosion. To effectively save existing vegetation, no disturbances of any kind should be allowed within a defined area around the vegetation. For trees, no construction activity should occur within the drip line of the tree.

**Timing**

- Provide for preservation of existing vegetation prior to the commencement of clearing and grubbing operations or other soil disturbing activities in areas where no construction activity is planned or will occur at a later date.

**Design and Layout**

- Mark areas to be preserved with temporary fencing. Include sufficient setback to protect roots.

  - Orange colored plastic mesh fencing works well.

  - Use appropriate fence posts and adequate post spacing and depth to completely support the fence in an upright position.

- Locate temporary roadways, stockpiles, and layout areas to avoid stands of trees, shrubs, and grass.

- Consider the impact of grade changes to existing vegetation and the root zone.

- Maintain existing irrigation systems where feasible. Temporary irrigation may be required.

- Instruct employees and subcontractors to honor protective devices. Prohibit heavy equipment, vehicular traffic, or storage of construction materials within the protected area.
Preservation Of Existing Vegetation  EC-2

Costs
There is little cost associated with preserving existing vegetation if properly planned during the project design, and these costs may be offset by aesthetic benefits that enhance property values. During construction, the cost for preserving existing vegetation will likely be less than the cost of applying erosion and sediment controls to the disturbed area. Replacing vegetation inadvertently destroyed during construction can be extremely expensive, sometimes in excess of $10,000 per tree.

Inspection and Maintenance
During construction, the limits of disturbance should remain clearly marked at all times. Irrigation or maintenance of existing vegetation should be described in the landscaping plan. If damage to protected trees still occurs, maintenance guidelines described below should be followed:

- Verify that protective measures remain in place. Restore damaged protection measures immediately.

- Serious tree injuries shall be attended to by an arborist.

- Damage to the crown, trunk, or root system of a retained tree shall be repaired immediately.

- Trench as far from tree trunks as possible, usually outside of the tree drip line or canopy. Curve trenches around trees to avoid large roots or root concentrations. If roots are encountered, consider tunneling under them. When trenching or tunneling near or under trees to be retained, place tunnels at least 18 in. below the ground surface, and not below the tree center to minimize impact on the roots.

- Do not leave tree roots exposed to air. Cover exposed roots with soil as soon as possible. If soil covering is not practical, protect exposed roots with wet burlap or peat moss until the tunnel or trench is ready for backfill.

- Cleanly remove the ends of damaged roots with a smooth cut.

- Fill trenches and tunnels as soon as possible. Careful filling and tamping will eliminate air spaces in the soil, which can damage roots.

- If bark damage occurs, cut back all loosened bark into the undamaged area, with the cut tapered at the top and bottom and drainage provided at the base of the wood. Limit cutting the undamaged area as much as possible.

- Aerate soil that has been compacted over a trees root zone by punching holes 12 in. deep with an iron bar, and moving the bar back and forth until the soil is loosened. Place holes 18 in. apart throughout the area of compacted soil under the tree crown.

- Fertilization
  - Fertilize stressed or damaged broadleaf trees to aid recovery.
  - Fertilize trees in the late fall or early spring.
Preservation Of Existing Vegetation  EC-2

- Apply fertilizer to the soil over the feeder roots and in accordance with label instructions, but never closer than 3 ft to the trunk. Increase the fertilized area by one-fourth of the crown area for conifers that have extended root systems.

- Retain protective measures until all other construction activity is complete to avoid damage during site cleanup and stabilization.

References
County of Sacramento Tree Preservation Ordinance, September 1981.
Hydraulic Mulch

Description and Purpose
Hydraulic Mulch consists of various types of fibrous materials mixed with water and sprayed onto the soil surface in slurry form to provide a layer of temporary protection from wind and water erosion.

Suitable Applications
Hydraulic mulch as a temporary, stand alone, erosion control BMP is suitable for disturbed areas that require temporary protection from wind and water erosion until permanent soil stabilization activities commence. Examples include:

- Rough-graded areas that will remain inactive for longer than permit-required thresholds (e.g., 14 days) or otherwise require stabilization to minimize erosion or prevent sediment discharges.
- Soil stockpiles.
- Slopes with exposed soil between existing vegetation such as trees or shrubs.
- Slopes planted with live, container-grown vegetation or plugs.
- Slopes burned by wildfire.

Hydraulic mulch can also be applied to augment other erosion control BMPs such as:

Targeted Constituents
- Sediment
- Nutrients
- Trash
- Metals
- Bacteria
- Oil and Grease
- Organics

Potential Alternatives
- EC-4 Hydroseeding
- EC-5 Soil Binders
- EC-6 Straw Mulch
- EC-7 Geotextiles and Mats
- EC-8 Wood Mulching
- EC-14 Compost Blanket
- EC-16 Non-Vegetative Stabilization
Hydraulic Mulch

- In conjunction with straw mulch (see EC-6 Straw Mulch) where the rate of hydraulic mulch is reduced to 100-500 lbs per acre and the slurry is applied over the straw as a tackifying agent to hold the straw in place.

- Supplemental application of soil amendments, such as fertilizer, lime, gypsum, soil bio-stimulants or compost.

Limitations
In general, hydraulic mulch is not limited by slope length, gradient or soil type. However, the following limitations typically apply:

- Most hydraulic mulch applications, particularly bonded fiber matrices (BFMs), require at least 24 hours to dry before rainfall occurs.

- Temporary applications (i.e., without a vegetative component) may require a second application in order to remain effective for an entire rainy season.

- Treatment areas must be accessible to hydraulic mulching equipment.

- Availability of water sources in remote areas for mixing and application.

- As a stand-alone temporary BMP, hydraulic mulches may need to be re-applied to maintain their erosion control effectiveness, typically after 6-12 months depending on the type of mulch used.

- Availability of hydraulic mulching equipment may be limited just prior to the rainy season and prior to storms due to high demand.

- Cellulose fiber mulches alone may not perform well on steep slopes or in course soils.

Implementation
- Where feasible, it is preferable to prepare soil surfaces prior to application by roughening embankments and fill areas with a crimping or punching type roller or by track walking.

- The majority of hydraulic mulch applications do not necessarily require surface/soil preparation (See EC-15 Soil Preparation) although in almost every case where re-vegetation is included as part of the practice, soil preparation can be beneficial. One of the advantages of hydraulic mulch over other erosion control methods is that it can be applied in areas where soil preparation is precluded by site conditions, such as steep slopes, rocky soils, or inaccessibility.

- Avoid mulch over spray onto roads, sidewalks, drainage channels, existing vegetation, etc.

- Hydraulic mulching is generally performed utilizing specialized machines that have a large water-holding/mixing tank and some form of mechanical agitation or other recirculation method to keep water, mulch and soil amendments in suspension. The mixed hydraulic slurry can be applied from a tower sprayer on top of the machine or by extending a hose to areas remote from the machine.
Hydraulic Mulch

- Where possible apply hydraulic mulch from multiple directions to adequately cover the soil. Application from a single direction can result in shadowing, uneven coverage and failure of the BMP.

- Hydraulic mulch can also include a vegetative component, such as seed, rhizomes, or stolons (see EC-4 Hydraulic Seed).

- Typical hydraulic mulch application rates range from 2,000 pounds per acre for standard mulches (SMs) to 3,500 pounds per acre for BFMs. However, the required amount of hydraulic mulch to provide adequate coverage of exposed topsoil may appear to exceed the standard rates when the roughness of the soil surface is changed due to soil preparation methods (see EC-15 Soil Preparation) or by slope gradient.

- Other factors such as existing soil moisture and soil texture can have a profound effect on the amount of hydraulic mulch required (i.e. application rate) applied to achieve an erosion-resistant covering.

- Avoid use of mulch without a tackifier component, especially on slopes.

- Mulches used in the hydraulic mulch slurry can include:
  - Cellulose fiber
  - Thermally-processed wood fibers
  - Cotton
  - Synthetics
  - Compost (see EC-14, Compost Blanket)

- Additional guidance on the comparison and selection of temporary slope stabilization methods is provided in Appendix F of the Handbook.

Categories of Hydraulic Mulches

Standard Hydraulic Mulch (SM)
Standard hydraulic mulches are generally applied at a rate of 2,000 pounds per acre and are manufactured containing around 5% tackifier (i.e. soil binder), usually a plant-derived guar or psyllium type. Most standard mulches are green in color derived from food-color based dyes.

Hydraulic Matrices (HM) and Stabilized Fiber Matrices (SFM)
Hydraulic matrices and stabilized fiber matrices are slurries which contain increased levels of tackifiers/soil binders; usually 10% or more by weight. HMs and SFMs have improved performance compared to a standard hydraulic mulch (SM) because of the additional percentage of tackifier and because of their higher application rates, typically 2,500 – 4,000 pounds per acre. Hydraulic matrices can include a mixture of fibers, for example, a 50/50 blend of paper and wood fiber. In the case of an SFM, the tackifier/soil binder is specified as a polyacrylamide (PAM).
Hydraulic Mulch

Bonded Fiber Matrix (BFM)
Bonded fiber matrices (BFMs) are hydraulically-applied systems of fibers, adhesives (typically guar based) and chemical cross-links. Upon drying, the slurry forms an erosion-resistant blanket that prevents soil erosion and promotes vegetation establishment. The cross-linked adhesive in the BFM should be biodegradable and should not dissolve or disperse upon re-wetting. BFM are typically applied at rates from 3,000 to 4,000 lbs/acre based on the manufacturer’s recommendation. BFM should not be applied immediately before, during or immediately after rainfall or if the soil is saturated. Depending on the product, BFM typically require 12 to 24 hours to dry and become effective.

Mechanically-Bonded Fiber Matrices (MBFM)
Mechanically-bonded fiber matrices (MBFMs) are hydraulically applied systems similar to BFM that use crimped synthetic fibers and PAM and are typically applied to a slope at a higher application rate than a standard BFM.

Hydraulic Compost Matrix (HCM)
Hydraulic compost matrix (HCM) is a field-derived practice whereby finely graded or sifted compost is introduced into the hydraulic mulch slurry. A guar-type tackifier can be added for steeper slope applications as well as any specified seed mixtures. A HCM can help to accelerate seed germination and growth. HCMs are particularly useful as an in-fill for three-dimensional re-vegetation geocomposites, such as turf reinforcement mats (TRM) (see EC-7 Geotextiles and Mats).

Costs
Average installed costs for hydraulic mulch categories are is provided in Table 1, below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>HYDRAULIC MULCH BMPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTALLED COSTS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>BMP</th>
<th>Installed Cost/Acre</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Hydraulic Mulching (SHM)</td>
<td>$1,700 - $3,600 per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydraulic Matrices (HMM) and Stabilized Fiber Matrices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guar-based</td>
<td>$2,000 - $4,000 per acre</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAM-based</td>
<td>$2,500 - $5,600 per acre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonded Fiber Matrix (BFM)</td>
<td>$3,900 - $6,600 per acre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanically Bonded Fiber Matrix (MBFM)</td>
<td>$4,500 - $6,000 per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydraulic Compost Matrix (HCM)</td>
<td>$3,000 - $3,500 per acre</td>
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Source: Caltrans Soil Stabilization BMP Research for Erosion and Sediment Controls, July 2007

Inspection and Maintenance
- Maintain an unbroken, temporary mulched ground cover throughout the period of construction when the soils are not being reworked.

- BMPs must be inspected in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected
weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.

- Areas where erosion is evident should be repaired and BMPs re-applied as soon as possible. Care should be exercised to minimize the damage to protected areas while making repairs, as any area damaged will require re-application of BMPs.

- Compare the number of bags or weight of applied mulch to the area treated to determine actual application rates and compliance with specifications.

References


Hydroseeding

Description and Purpose
Hydroseeding typically consists of applying a mixture of a hydraulic mulch, seed, fertilizer, and stabilizing emulsion with a hydraulic mulcher, to temporarily protect exposed soils from erosion by water and wind. Hydraulic seeding, or hydroseeding, is simply the method by which temporary or permanent seed is applied to the soil surface.

Suitable Applications
Hydroseeding is suitable for disturbed areas requiring temporary protection until permanent stabilization is established, for disturbed areas that will be re-disturbed following an extended period of inactivity, or to apply permanent stabilization measures. Hydroseeding without mulch or other cover (e.g. EC-7, Erosion Control Blanket) is not a stand-alone erosion control BMP and should be combined with additional measures until vegetation establishment.

Typical applications for hydroseeding include:

- Disturbed soil/graded areas where permanent stabilization or continued earthwork is not anticipated prior to seed germination.
- Cleared and graded areas exposed to seasonal rains or temporary irrigation.
- Areas not subject to heavy wear by construction equipment or high traffic.

Targeted Constituents
- Sediment
- Nutrients
- Trash
- Metals
- Bacteria
- Oil and Grease
- Organics

Potential Alternatives
- EC-3 Hydraulic Mulch
- EC-5 Soil Binders
- EC-6 Straw Mulch
- EC-7 Geotextiles and Mats
- EC-8 Wood Mulching
- EC-14 Compost Blanket
- EC-15 Non-Vegetative Stabilization
Hydroseeding

Limitations

- Availability of hydroseeding equipment may be limited just prior to the rainy season and prior to storms due to high demand.

- Hydraulic seed should be applied with hydraulic mulch or a stand-alone hydroseed application should be followed by one of the following:
  - Straw mulch (see Straw Mulch EC-6)
  - Rolled erosion control products (see Geotextiles and Mats EC-7)
  - Application of Compost Blanket (see Compost Blanket EC-14)

Hydraulic seed may be used alone only on small flat surfaces when there is sufficient time in the season to ensure adequate vegetation establishment and coverage to provide adequate erosion control.

- Hydraulic seed without mulch does not provide immediate erosion control.

- Temporary seeding may not be appropriate for steep slopes (i.e., slopes readily prone to rill erosion or without sufficient topsoil).

- Temporary seeding may not be appropriate in dry periods without supplemental irrigation.

- Temporary vegetation may have to be removed before permanent vegetation is applied.

- Temporary vegetation may not be appropriate for short term inactivity (i.e. less than 3-6 months).

Implementation

In order to select appropriate hydraulic seed mixtures, an evaluation of site conditions should be performed with respect to:

- Soil conditions
- Site topography and exposure (sun/wind)
- Season and climate
- Vegetation types

- Maintenance requirements
- Sensitive adjacent areas
- Water availability
- Plans for permanent vegetation

The local office of the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is an excellent source of information on appropriate seed mixes.

The following steps should be followed for implementation:

- Where appropriate or feasible, soil should be prepared to receive the seed by disking or otherwise scarifying (See EC-15, Soil Preparation) the surface to eliminate crust, improve air and water infiltration and create a more favorable environment for germination and growth.
Hydroseeding

- Avoid use of hydraulic seed in areas where the BMP would be incompatible with future earthwork activities.

- Hydraulic seed can be applied using a multiple step or one step process.
  - In a multiple step process, hydraulic seed is applied first, followed by mulch or a Rolled Erosion Control Product (RECP).
  - In the one step process, hydraulic seed is applied with hydraulic mulch in a hydraulic matrix. When the one step process is used to apply the mixture of fiber, seed, etc., the seed rate should be increased to compensate for all seeds not having direct contact with the soil.

- All hydraulically seeded areas should have mulch, or alternate erosion control cover to keep seeds in place and to moderate soil moisture and temperature until the seeds germinate and grow.

- All seeds should be in conformance with the California State Seed Law of the Department of Agriculture. Each seed bag should be delivered to the site sealed and clearly marked as to species, purity, percent germination, dealer's guarantee, and dates of test. The container should be labeled to clearly reflect the amount of Pure Live Seed (PLS) contained. All legume seed should be pellet inoculated. Inoculant sources should be species specific and should be applied at a rate of 2 lb of inoculant per 100 lb seed.

- Commercial fertilizer should conform to the requirements of the California Food and Agricultural Code, which can be found at http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/html/fac_table_of_contents.html. Fertilizer should be pelleted or granular form.

- Follow up applications should be made as needed to cover areas of poor coverage or germination/vegetation establishment and to maintain adequate soil protection.

- Avoid over spray onto roads, sidewalks, drainage channels, existing vegetation, etc.

- Additional guidance on the comparison and selection of temporary slope stabilization methods is provided in Appendix F of the Handbook.

**Costs**

Average cost for installation and maintenance may vary from as low as $1,900 per acre for flat slopes and stable soils, to $4,000 per acre for moderate to steep slopes and/or erosive soils. Cost of seed mixtures vary based on types of required vegetation.

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<tr>
<th>BMP</th>
<th>Installed Cost per Acre</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hydraulic Seed</td>
<td>$1,900-$4,000</td>
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Source: Caltrans Soil Stabilization BMP Research for Erosion and Sediment Controls, July 2007
Hydroseeding

Inspection and Maintenance

- BMPs must be inspected in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.

- Areas where erosion is evident should be repaired and BMPs re-applied as soon as possible. Care should be exercised to minimize the damage to protected areas while making repairs, as any area damaged will require re-application of BMPs.

- Where seeds fail to germinate, or they germinate and die, the area must be re-seeded, fertilized, and mulched within the planting season, using not less than half the original application rates.

- Irrigation systems, if applicable, should be inspected daily while in use to identify system malfunctions and line breaks. When line breaks are detected, the system must be shut down immediately and breaks repaired before the system is put back into operation.

- Irrigation systems should be inspected for complete coverage and adjusted as needed to maintain complete coverage.

References


Soil Binders

Description and Purpose
Soil binding consists of application and maintenance of a soil stabilizer to exposed soil surfaces. Soil binders are materials applied to the soil surface to temporarily prevent water and wind induced erosion of exposed soils on construction sites.

Suitable Applications
Soil binders are typically applied to disturbed areas requiring temporary protection. Because soil binders, when used as a stand-alone practice, can often be incorporated into the soil, they are a good alternative to mulches in areas where grading activities will soon resume. Soil binders are commonly used in the following areas:

- Rough graded soils that will be inactive for a short period of time
- Soil stockpiles
- Temporary haul roads prior to placement of crushed rock
- Compacted soil road base
- Construction staging, materials storage, and layout areas

Limitations
- Soil binders are temporary in nature and may need reapplication.

Targeted Constituents
- Sediment
- Nutrients
- Trash
- Metals
- Bacteria
- Oil and Grease
- Organics

Potential Alternatives
- EC-3 Hydraulic Mulch
- EC-4 Hydroseeding
- EC-6 Straw Mulch
- EC-7 Geotextiles and Mats
- EC-8 Wood Mulching

Categories
- EC Erosion Control
- SE Sediment Control
- TC Tracking Control
- WE Wind Erosion Control
- NS Non-Stormwater Management Control
- WM Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control

Legend:
☑ Primary Category
☒ Secondary Category

CASQA
CALIFORNIA STORMWATER QUALITY ASSOCIATION

November 2009
California Stormwater BMP Handbook
Construction
www.casqa.org
Soil Binders

- Soil binders require a minimum curing time until fully effective, as prescribed by the manufacturer. Curing time may be 24 hours or longer. Soil binders may need reapplication after a storm event.

- Soil binders will generally experience spot failures during heavy rainfall events. If runoff penetrates the soil at the top of a slope treated with a soil binder, it is likely that the runoff will undercut the stabilized soil layer and discharge at a point further down slope.

- Plant-material-based soil binders do not generally hold up to pedestrian or vehicular traffic across treated areas as well as polymeric emulsion blends or cementitious-based binders.

- Soil binders may not sufficiently penetrate compacted soils.

- Some soil binders are soil texture specific in terms of their effectiveness. For example, polyacrylamides (PAMs) work very well on silt and clayey soils but their performance decreases dramatically in sandy soils.

- Some soil binders may not perform well with low relative humidity. Under rainy conditions, some agents may become slippery or leach out of the soil.

- Soil binders may not cure if low temperatures occur within 24 hours of application.

- The water quality impacts of some chemical soil binders are relatively unknown and some may have water quality impacts due to their chemical makeup.

Implementation

General Considerations

- Soil binders should conform to local municipality specifications and requirements.

- Site soil types will dictate appropriate soil binders to be used.

- A soil binder must be environmentally benign (non-toxic to plant and animal life), easy to apply, easy to maintain, economical, and should not stain paved or painted surfaces. Soil binders should not pollute stormwater when cured. Obtain a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) from the manufacturer to ensure non-toxicity.

- Stormwater runoff from PAM treated soils should pass through one of the following sediment control BMP prior to discharging to surface waters.
  - When the total drainage area is greater than or equal to 5 acres, PAM treated areas should drain to a sediment basin.
  - Areas less than 5 acres should drain to sediment control BMPs, such as a sediment trap, or a series of check dams. The total number of check dams used should be maximized to achieve the greatest amount of settlement of sediment prior to discharging from the site. Each check dam should be spaced evenly in the drainage channel through which stormwater flows are discharged off site.

- Performance of soil binders depends on temperature, humidity, and traffic across treated areas.
Soil Binders

- Avoid over spray onto roads, sidewalks, drainage channels, existing vegetation, etc.
- Additional guidance on the comparison and selection of temporary slope stabilization methods is provided in Appendix F of the Handbook.

Selecting a Soil Binder

Properties of common soil binders used for erosion control are provided on Table 1 at the end of this Fact Sheet. Use Table 1 to select an appropriate soil binder. Refer to WE-1, Wind Erosion Control, for dust control soil binders.

Factors to consider when selecting a soil binder include the following:

- Suitability to situation - Consider where the soil binder will be applied, if it needs a high resistance to leaching or abrasion, and whether it needs to be compatible with any existing vegetation. Determine the length of time soil stabilization will be needed, and if the soil binder will be placed in an area where it will degrade rapidly. In general, slope steepness is not a discriminating factor for the listed soil binders.

- Soil types and surface materials - Fines and moisture content are key properties of surface materials. Consider a soil binder's ability to penetrate, likelihood of leaching, and ability to form a surface crust on the surface materials.

- Frequency of application - The frequency of application is related to the functional longevity of the binder, which can be affected by subgrade conditions, surface type, climate, and maintenance schedule.

- Frequent applications could lead to high costs. Application frequency may be minimized if the soil binder has good penetration, low evaporation, and good longevity. Consider also that frequent application will require frequent equipment clean up.

Plant-Material-Based (Short Lived, <6 months) Binders

Guar: Guar is a non-toxic, biodegradable, natural galactomannan-based hydrocolloid treated with dispersant agents for easy field mixing. It should be mixed with water at the rate of 11 to 15 lb per 1,000 gallons. Recommended minimum application rates are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Rates for Guar Soil Stabilizer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slope (H:V):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lb/acre:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Psyllium: Psyllium is composed of the finely ground muciloid coating of plantago seeds that is applied as a dry powder or in a wet slurry to the surface of the soil. It dries to form a firm but rewettable membrane that binds soil particles together, but permits germination and growth of seed. Psyllium requires 12 to 18 hours drying time. Application rates should be from 80 to 200 lb/acre, with enough water in solution to allow for a uniform slurry flow.

Starch: Starch is non-ionic, cold water soluble (pre-gelatinized) granular cornstarch. The material is mixed with water and applied at the rate of 150 lb/acre. Approximate drying time is 9 to 12 hours.
Plant-Material-Based (Long Lived, 6-12 months) Binders

Pitch and Rosin Emulsion: Generally, a non-ionic pitch and rosin emulsion has a minimum solids content of 48%. The rosin should be a minimum of 26% of the total solids content. The soil stabilizer should be non-corrosive, water dilutable emulsion that upon application cures to a water insoluble binding and cementing agent. For soil erosion control applications, the emulsion is diluted and should be applied as follows:

- For clayey soil: 5 parts water to 1 part emulsion
- For sandy soil: 10 parts water to 1 part emulsion

Application can be by water truck or hydraulic seeder with the emulsion and product mixture applied at the rate specified by the manufacturer.

Polymeric Emulsion Blend Binders

Acrylic Copolymers and Polymers: Polymeric soil stabilizers should consist of a liquid or solid polymer or copolymer with an acrylic base that contains a minimum of 55% solids. The polymeric compound should be handled and mixed in a manner that will not cause foaming or should contain an anti-foaming agent. The polymeric emulsion should not exceed its shelf life or expiration date; manufacturers should provide the expiration date. Polymeric soil stabilizer should be readily miscible in water, non-injurious to seed or animal life, non-flammable, should provide surface soil stabilization for various soil types without totally inhibiting water infiltration, and should not re-emulsify when cured. The applied compound typically requires 12 to 24 hours drying time. Liquid copolymer should be diluted at a rate of 10 parts water to 1 part polymer and the mixture applied to soil at a rate of 1,175 gallons/acre.

Liquid Polymers of Methacrylates and Acrylates: This material consists of a tackifier/sealer that is a liquid polymer of methacrylates and acrylates. It is an aqueous 100% acrylic emulsion blend of 40% solids by volume that is free from styrene, acetate, vinyl, ethoxylated surfactants or silicates. For soil stabilization applications, it is diluted with water in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations, and applied with a hydraulic seeder at the rate of 20 gallons/acre. Drying time is 12 to 18 hours after application.

Copolymers of Sodium Acrylates and Acrylamides: These materials are non-toxic, dry powders that are copolymers of sodium acrylate and acrylamide. They are mixed with water and applied to the soil surface for erosion control at rates that are determined by slope gradient:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slope Gradient (H:V)</th>
<th>lb/acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flat to 5:1</td>
<td>3.0 – 5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:1 to 3:1</td>
<td>5.0 – 10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:1 to 1:1</td>
<td>10.0 – 20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poly-Acrylamide (PAM) and Copolymer of Acrylamide: Linear copolymer polyacrylamide for use as a soil binder is packaged as a dry flowable solid, as a liquid. Refer to the manufacturer’s recommendation for dilution and application rates as they vary based on liquid or dry form, site conditions and climate.

- Limitations specific to PAM are as follows:
Soil Binders

- Do not use PAM on a slope that flows into a water body without passing through a sediment trap or sediment basin.

- The specific PAM copolymer formulation must be anionic. Cationic PAM should not be used in any application because of known aquatic toxicity problems. Only the highest drinking water grade PAM, certified for compliance with ANSI/NSF Standard 60 for drinking water treatment, should be used for soil applications.

- PAM designated for erosion and sediment control should be “water soluble” or “linear” or “non-cross linked”.

- PAM should not be used as a stand-alone BMP to protect against water-based erosion. When combined with mulch, its effectiveness increases dramatically.

**Hydro-Colloid Polymers:** Hydro-Colloid Polymers are various combinations of dry flowable poly-acrylamides, copolymers and hydro-colloid polymers that are mixed with water and applied to the soil surface at rates of 55 to 60 lb/acre. Drying times are 0 to 4 hours.

**Cementitious-Based Binders**

**Gypsum:** This is a formulated gypsum based product that readily mixes with water and mulch to form a thin protective crust on the soil surface. It is composed of high purity gypsum that is ground, calcined and processed into calcium sulfate hemihydrate with a minimum purity of 86%. It is mixed in a hydraulic seeder and applied at rates 4,000 to 12,000 lb/acre. Drying time is 4 to 8 hours.

**Applying Soil Binders**

After selecting an appropriate soil binder, the untreated soil surface must be prepared before applying the soil binder. The untreated soil surface must contain sufficient moisture to assist the agent in achieving uniform distribution. In general, the following steps should be followed:

- Follow manufacturer’s written recommendations for application rates, pre-wetting of application area, and cleaning of equipment after use.

- Prior to application, roughen embankment and fill areas.

- Consider the drying time for the selected soil binder and apply with sufficient time before anticipated rainfall. Soil binders should not be applied during or immediately before rainfall.

- Avoid over spray onto roads, sidewalks, drainage channels, sound walls, existing vegetation, etc.

- Soil binders should not be applied to frozen soil, areas with standing water, under freezing or rainy conditions, or when the temperature is below 40°F during the curing period.

- More than one treatment is often necessary, although the second treatment may be diluted or have a lower application rate.

- Generally, soil binders require a minimum curing time of 24 hours before they are fully effective. Refer to manufacturer’s instructions for specific cure time.
For liquid agents:

- Crown or slope ground to avoid ponding.

- Uniformly pre-wet ground at 0.03 to 0.3 gal/yd² or according to manufacturer's recommendations.

- Apply solution under pressure. Overlap solution 6 to 12 in.

- Allow treated area to cure for the time recommended by the manufacturer; typically at least 24 hours.

- Apply second treatment before first treatment becomes ineffective, using 50% application rate.

- In low humidities, reactivate chemicals by re-wetting with water at 0.1 to 0.2 gal/yd².

Costs
Costs vary according to the soil stabilizer selected for implementation. The following are approximate installed costs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plant-Material-Based (Short Lived) Binders</td>
<td>$700-$900</td>
<td>$770-$990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant-Material-Based (Long Lived) Binders</td>
<td>$1,200-$1,500</td>
<td>$1,320-$1,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polymeric Emulsion Blend Binders</td>
<td>$700-$1,500</td>
<td>$770-$1,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cementitious-Based Binders</td>
<td>$800-$1,200</td>
<td>$880-$1,350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. 2009 costs reflect a 10% escalation over year 2000 costs. Escalation based on informal survey of industry trends. Note: Expected cost increase is offset by competitive economic conditions.

Inspection and Maintenance

- BMPs must be inspected in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.

- Areas where erosion is evident should be repaired and BMPs re-applied as soon as possible. Care should be exercised to minimize the damage to protected areas while making repairs, as any area damaged will require re-application of BMPs.

- Reapply the selected soil binder as needed to maintain effectiveness.
## Soil Binders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Binder Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plant Material Based (Short Lived)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Cost</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to Leaching</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to Abrasion</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longevity</td>
<td>Short to Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Curing Time before Rain</td>
<td>9 to 18 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility with Existing Vegetation</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of Degradation</td>
<td>Biodegradable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Intensive</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Application Equipment</td>
<td>Water Truck or Hydraulic Mulcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid/Powder</td>
<td>Powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Crusting</td>
<td>Yes, but dissolves on rewetting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean Up</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erosion Control Application Rate</td>
<td>Varies (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) See Implementation for specific rates.
References


Straw Mulch

Description and Purpose
Straw mulch consists of placing a uniform layer of straw and incorporating it into the soil with a studded roller or crimpler, or anchoring it with a tackifier or stabilizing emulsion. Straw mulch protects the soil surface from the impact of rain drops, preventing soil particles from becoming dislodged.

Suitable Applications
Straw mulch is suitable for disturbed areas requiring temporary protection until permanent stabilization is established. Straw mulch can be specified for the following applications:

- As a stand-alone BMP on disturbed areas until soils can be prepared for permanent vegetation. The longevity of straw mulch is typically less than six months.
- Applied in combination with temporary seeding strategies
- Applied in combination with permanent seeding strategies to enhance plant establishment and final soil stabilization
- Applied around containerized plantings to control erosion until the plants become established to provide permanent stabilization

Limitations
- Availability of straw and straw blowing equipment may be limited just prior to the rainy season and prior to storms due to high demand.

Categories
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>Erosion Control ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Sediment Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Tracking Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE</td>
<td>Wind Erosion Control x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Non-Stormwater Management Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WM</td>
<td>Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Primary Category
- Secondary Category

Targeted Constituents
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sediment ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil and Grease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential Alternatives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC-3 Hydraulic Mulch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC-4 Hydroseeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC-6 Soil Binders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC-7 Geotextiles and Mats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC-8 Wood Mulching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC-14 Compost Blanket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Straw Mulch

- There is a potential for introduction of weed seed and unwanted plant material if weed-free agricultural straw is not specified.

- Straw mulch applied by hand is more time intensive and potentially costly.

- Wind may limit application of straw and blow straw into undesired locations.

- May have to be removed prior to permanent seeding or prior to further earthwork.

- “Punching” of straw does not work in sandy soils, necessitating the use of tackifiers.

- Potential fugitive dust control issues associated with straw applications can occur.
  Application of a stabilizing emulsion or a water stream at the same time straw is being blown can reduce this problem.

- Use of plastic netting should be avoided in areas where wildlife may be entrapped and may be prohibited for projects in certain areas with sensitive wildlife species, especially reptiles and amphibians.

Implementation

- Straw should be derived from weed-free wheat, rice, or barley. Where required by the plans, specifications, permits, or environmental documents, native grass straw should be used.

- Use tackifier to anchor straw mulch to the soil on slopes.

- Crimping, punch roller-type rollers, or track walking may also be used to incorporate straw mulch into the soil on slopes. Track walking can be used where other methods are impractical.

- Avoid placing straw onto roads, sidewalks, drainage channels, sound walls, existing vegetation, etc.

- Straw mulch with tackifier should not be applied during or immediately before rainfall.

- Additional guidance on the comparison and selection of temporary slope stabilization methods is provided in Appendix F of the Handbook.

Application Procedures

- When using a tackifier to anchor the straw mulch, roughen embankment or fill areas by rolling with a crimping or punching-type roller or by track walking before placing the straw mulch. Track walking should only be used where rolling is impractical.

- Apply straw at a rate of between 3,000 and 4,000 lb/acre, either by machine or by hand distribution and provide 100% ground cover. A lighter application is used for flat surfaces and a heavier application is used for slopes.

- Evenly distribute straw mulch on the soil surface.

- Anchoring straw mulch to the soil surface by "punching" it into the soil mechanically (incorporating) can be used in lieu of a tackifier.
Straw Mulch

- Methods for holding the straw mulch in place depend upon the slope steepness, accessibility, soil conditions, and longevity.
  - A tackifier acts to glue the straw fibers together and to the soil surface. The tackifier should be selected based on longevity and ability to hold the fibers in place. A tackifier is typically applied at a rate of 125 lb/acre. In windy conditions, the rates are typically 180 lb/acre.
  - On very small areas, a spade or shovel can be used to punch in straw mulch.
  - On slopes with soils that are stable enough and of sufficient gradient to safely support construction equipment without contributing to compaction and instability problems, straw can be "punched" into the ground using a knife blade roller or a straight bladed coulter, known commercially as a "crimer."

Costs
Average annual cost for installation and maintenance is included in the table below. Application by hand is more time intensive and potentially more costly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BMP</th>
<th>Unit Cost per Acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Straw mulch, crimped or punched</td>
<td>$2,458-$5,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw mulch with tackifier</td>
<td>$1,823-$4,802</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Caltrans Soil Stabilization BMP Research for Erosion and Sediment Controls, July 2007

Inspection and Maintenance
- BMPs must be inspected in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.
- Areas where erosion is evident should be repaired and BMPs re-applied as soon as possible. Care should be exercised to minimize the damage to protected areas while making repairs, as any area damaged will require re-application of BMPs.
- The key consideration in inspection and maintenance is that the straw needs to last long enough to achieve erosion control objectives. Straw mulch as a stand-alone BMP is temporary and is not suited for long-term erosion control.
- Maintain an unbroken, temporary mulched ground cover while disturbed soil areas are inactive. Repair any damaged ground cover and re-mulch exposed areas.
- Reapplication of straw mulch and tackifier may be required to maintain effective soil stabilization over disturbed areas and slopes.
References


which must be secured with U-shaped staples or stakes in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations.

Site Preparation
- Proper soil preparation is essential to ensure complete contact of the RECP with the soil. Soil Roughening is not recommended in areas where RECPs will be installed.
- Grade and shape the area of installation.
- Remove all rocks, clods, vegetation or other obstructions so that the installed blankets or mats will have complete, direct contact with the soil.
- Prepare seedbed by loosening 2 to 3 in. of topsoil.

Seeding/Planting
Seed the area before blanket installation for erosion control and re-vegetation. Seeding after mat installation is often specified for turf reinforcement application. When seeding prior to blanket installation, all areas disturbed during blanket installation must be re-seeded. Where soil filling is specified for turf reinforcement mats (TRMs), seed the matting and the entire disturbed area after installation and prior to filling the mat with soil.

Fertilize and seed in accordance with seeding specifications or other types of landscaping plans. The protective matting can be laid over areas where grass has been planted and the seedlings have emerged. Where vines or other ground covers are to be planted, lay the protective matting first and then plant through matting according to design of planting.

Check Slots
Check slots shall be installed as required by the manufacturer.

Laying and Securing Matting
- Before laying the matting, all check slots should be installed and the seedbed should be friable, made free from clods, rocks, and roots. The surface should be compacted and finished according to the requirements of the manufacturer’s recommendations.
- Mechanical or manual lay down equipment should be capable of handling full rolls of fabric and laying the fabric smoothly without wrinkles or folds. The equipment should meet the fabric manufacturer’s recommendations or equivalent standards.

Anchoring
- U-shaped wire staples, metal geotextile stake pins, or triangular wooden stakes can be used to anchor mats and blankets to the ground surface.
- Wire staples should be made of minimum 11 gauge steel wire and should be U-shaped with 8 in. legs and 2 in. crown.
- Metal stake pins should be 0.188 in. diameter steel with a 1.5 in. steel washer at the head of the pin, and 8 in. in length.
- Wire staples and metal stakes should be driven flush to the soil surface.
- **Straw coconut fiber blanket** should be machine produced mats of 70 percent straw and 30 percent coconut fiber with a biodegradable netting top layer and a biodegradable bottom net. The straw and coconut fiber should be attached to the netting with biodegradable thread or glue strips. The straw coconut fiber blanket should be of consistent thickness. The straw and coconut fiber should be evenly distributed over the entire area of the blanket. Straw coconut fiber blanket should be furnished in rolled strips a minimum of 6.5 ft wide, a minimum of 80 ft long and a minimum of 0.5 lb/yard³. Straw coconut fiber blankets must be secured in place with wire staples. Staples should be made of minimum 11 gauge steel wire and should be U-shaped with 8 in. legs and 2 in. crown.

- Non-biodegradable RECPs are typically composed of polypropylene, polyethylene, nylon or other synthetic fibers. In some cases, a combination of biodegradable and synthetic fibers is used to construct the RECP. Netting used to hold these fibers together: is typically non-biodegradable as well.

- **Plastic netting** is a lightweight biaxially oriented netting designed for securing loose mulches like straw or paper to soil surfaces to establish vegetation. The netting is photodegradable. The netting is supplied in rolled strips, which must be secured with U-shaped staples or stakes in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations.

- **Plastic mesh** is an open weave geotextile that is composed of an extruded synthetic fiber woven into a mesh with an opening size of less than 3/4 in. It is used with re-vegetation or may be used to secure loose fiber such as straw to the ground. The material is supplied in rolled strips, which must be secured to the soil with U-shaped staples or stakes in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations.

- **Synthetic fiber with netting** is a mat that is composed of durable synthetic fibers treated to resist chemicals and ultraviolet light. The mat is a dense, three dimensional mesh of synthetic (typically polyolefin) fibers stitched between two polypropylene nets. The mats are designed to be re-vegetated and provide a permanent composite system of soil, roots, and geomatrix. The material is furnished in rolled strips, which must be secured with U-shaped staples or stakes in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations.

- **Bonded synthetic fibers** consist of a three dimensional geomatrix nylon (or other synthetic) matting. Typically it has more than 90 percent open area, which facilitates root growth. It's tough root reinforcing system anchors vegetation and protects against hydraulic lift and shear forces created by high volume discharges. It can be installed over prepared soil, followed by seeding into the mat. Once vegetated, it becomes an invisible composite system of soil, roots, and geomatrix. The material is furnished in rolled strips that must be secured with U-shaped staples or stakes in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations.

- **Combination synthetic and biodegradable RECPs** consist of biodegradable fibers, such as wood fiber or coconut fiber, with a heavy polypropylene net stitched to the top and a high strength continuous filament geomatrix or net stitched to the bottom. The material is designed to enhance re-vegetation. The material is furnished in rolled strips,
- **Jute** is a natural fiber that is made into a yarn that is loosely woven into a biodegradable mesh. The performance of jute as a stand-alone RECP is low. Most other RECPs outperform jute as a temporary erosion control product and therefore jute is not commonly used. It is designed to be used in conjunction with vegetation. The material is supplied in rolled strips, which should be secured to the soil with U-shaped staples or stakes in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations.

- **Excelsior** (curled wood fiber) blanket material should consist of machine produced mats of curled wood excelsior with 80 percent of the fiber 6 in. or longer. The excelsior blanket should be of consistent thickness. The wood fiber must be evenly distributed over the entire area of the blanket. The top surface of the blanket should be covered with a photodegradable extruded plastic mesh. The blanket should be smolder resistant without the use of chemical additives and should be non-toxic and non-injurious to plant and animal life. Excelsior blankets should be furnished in rolled strips, a minimum of 48 in. wide, and should have an average weight of 0.8 lb/yd², ±10 percent, at the time of manufacture. Excelsior blankets must be secured in place with wire staples. Staples should be made of minimum 11 gauge steel wire and should be U-shaped with 8 in. legs and 2 in. crown.

- **Straw blanket** should be machine produced mats of straw with a lightweight biodegradable netting top layer. The straw should be attached to the netting with biodegradable thread or glue strips. The straw blanket should be of consistent thickness. The straw should be evenly distributed over the entire area of the blanket. Straw blanket should be furnished in rolled strips a minimum of 6.5 ft wide, a minimum of 80 ft long and a minimum of 0.5 lb/yd². Straw blankets must be secured in place with wire staples. Staples should be made of minimum 11 gauge steel wire and should be U-shaped with 8 in. legs and 2 in. crown.

- **Wood fiber blanket** is composed of biodegradable fiber mulch with extruded plastic netting held together with adhesives. The material is designed to enhance re-vegetation. The material is furnished in rolled strips, which must be secured to the ground with U-shaped staples or stakes in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations.

- **Coconut fiber blanket** should be a machine produced mat of 100 percent coconut fiber with biodegradable netting on the top and bottom. The coconut fiber should be attached to the netting with biodegradable thread or glue strips. The coconut fiber blanket should be of consistent thickness. The coconut fiber should be evenly distributed over the entire area of the blanket. Coconut fiber blanket should be furnished in rolled strips with a minimum of 6.5 ft wide, a minimum of 80 ft long and a minimum of 0.5 lb/yd². Coconut fiber blankets must be secured in place with wire staples. Staples should be made of minimum 11 gauge steel wire and should be U-shaped with 8 in. legs and 2 in. crown.

- **Coconut fiber mesh** is a thin permeable membrane made from coconut or corn fiber that is spun into a yarn and woven into a biodegradable mat. It is designed to be used in conjunction with vegetation and typically has longevity of several years. The material is supplied in rolled strips, which must be secured to the soil with U-shaped staples or stakes in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations.
Geotextiles and Mats

Implementation

Material Selection

- Natural RECPs have been found to be effective where re-vegetation will be provided by re-seeding. The choice of material should be based on the size of area, side slopes, surface conditions such as hardness, moisture, weed growth, and availability of materials.

- Additional guidance on the comparison and selection of temporary slope stabilization methods is provided in Appendix F of the Handbook.

- The following natural and synthetic RECPs are commonly used:

Geotextiles

- Material can be a woven or a non-woven polypropylene fabric with minimum thickness of 0.06 in., minimum width of 12 ft and should have minimum tensile strength of 150 lbs (warp), 80 lbs (fill) in conformance with the requirements in ASTM Designation: D 4632. The permittivity of the fabric should be approximately 0.07 sec⁻¹ in conformance with the requirements in ASTM Designation: D4491. The fabric should have an ultraviolet (UV) stability of 70 percent in conformance with the requirements in ASTM designation: D4355. Geotextile blankets must be secured in place with wire staples or sandbags and by keying into tops of slopes to prevent infiltration of surface waters under geotextile. Staples should be made of minimum 11 gauge steel wire and should be U-shaped with 8 in. legs and 2 in. crown.

- Geotextiles may be reused if they are suitable for the use intended.

Plastic Covers

- Generally plastic sheeting should only be used as stockpile covering or for very small graded areas for short periods of time (such as through one imminent storm event). If plastic sheeting must be used, choose a plastic that will withstand photo degradation.

- Plastic sheeting should have a minimum thickness of 6 mils, and must be keyed in at the top of slope (when used as a temporary slope protection) and firmly held in place with sandbags or other weights placed no more than 10 ft apart. Seams are typically taped or weighted down their entire length, and there should be at least a 12 in. to 24 in. overlap of all seams. Edges should be embedded a minimum of 6 in. in soil (when used as a temporary slope protection).

- All sheeting must be inspected periodically after installation and after significant rainstorms to check for erosion, undermining, and anchorage failure. Any failures must be repaired immediately. If washout or breakages occur, the material should be re-installed after repairing the damage to the slope.

Erosion Control Blankets/Mats

- Biodegradable RECPs are typically composed of jute fibers, curled wood fibers, straw, coconut fiber, or a combination of these materials. In order for an RECP to be considered 100% biodegradable, the netting, sewing or adhesive system that holds the biodegradable mulch fibers together must also be biodegradable. See typical installation details at the end of this fact sheet.
Channels with flows exceeding 3.3 ft/s

Channels to be vegetated

Stockpiles

Slopes adjacent to water bodies

**Limitations**

- RECP installed costs are generally higher than other erosion control BMPs, limiting their use to areas where other BMPs are ineffective (e.g. channels, steep slopes).

- RECPs may delay seed germination, due to reduction in soil temperature.

- RECPs are generally not suitable for excessively rocky sites or areas where the final vegetation will be mowed (since staples and netting can catch in mowers). If a staple or pin cannot be driven into the soil because the underlying soil is too hard or rocky, then an alternative BMP should be selected.

- If used for temporary erosion control, RECPs should be removed and disposed of prior to application of permanent soil stabilization measures.

- The use of plastic should be limited to covering stockpiles or very small graded areas for short periods of time (such as through one imminent storm event) until more environmentally friendly measures, such as seeding and mulching, may be installed.
  - Plastic sheeting is easily vandalized, easily torn, photodegradable, and must be disposed of at a landfill.
  - Plastic sheeting results in 100% runoff, which may cause serious erosion problems in the areas receiving the increased flow.

- RECPs may have limitations based on soil type, slope gradient, or channel flow rate; consult the manufacturer for proper selection.

- Not suitable for areas that have foot traffic (tripping hazard) – e.g., pad areas around buildings under construction.

- RECPs that incorporate a plastic netting (e.g. straw blanket typically uses a plastic netting to hold the straw in place) may not be suitable near known wildlife habitat. Wildlife can become trapped in the plastic netting.

- RECPs may have limitations in extremely windy climates. However, when RECPs are properly trenched at the top and bottom and stapled in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations, problems with wind can be minimized.
Geotextiles and Mats

Description and Purpose
Mattings, or Rolled Erosion Control Products (RECPs), can be made of natural or synthetic materials or a combination of the two. RECPs are used to cover the soil surface to reduce erosion from rainfall impact, hold soil in place, and absorb and hold moisture near the soil surface. Additionally, RECPs may be used to stabilize soils until vegetation is established or to reinforce non-woody surface vegetation.

Suitable Applications
RECPs are typically applied on slopes where erosion hazard is high and vegetation will be slow to establish. Mattings are also used on stream banks, swales and other drainage channels where moving water at velocities between 3 ft/s and 6 ft/s are likely to cause scour and wash out new vegetation, and in areas where the soil surface is disturbed and where existing vegetation has been removed. RECPs may also be used when seeding cannot occur (e.g., late season construction and/or the arrival of an early rain season). RECPs should be considered when the soils are fine grained and potentially erosive. RECPs should be considered in the following situations.

- Steep slopes, generally steeper than 3:1 (H:V)
- Slopes where the erosion potential is high
- Slopes and disturbed soils where mulch must be anchored
- Disturbed areas where plants are slow to develop

Targeted Constituents
Sediment

Potential Alternatives
EC-3 Hydraulic Mulch
EC-4 Hydroseeding
Geotextiles and Mats

Installation on Slopes
Installation should be in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. In general, these will be as follows:

- Begin at the top of the slope and anchor the blanket in a 6 in. deep by 6 in. wide trench. Backfill trench and tamper earth firmly.
- Unroll blanket down slope in the direction of water flow.
- Overlap the edges of adjacent parallel rolls 2 to 3 in. and staple every 3 ft (or greater, per manufacturer's specifications).
- When blankets must be spliced, place blankets end over end (shingle style) with 6 in. overlap. Staple through overlapped area, approximately 12 in. apart.
- Lay blankets loosely and maintain direct contact with the soil. Do not stretch.
- Staple blankets sufficiently to anchor blanket and maintain contact with the soil. Staples should be placed down the center and staggered with the staples placed along the edges. Steep slopes, 1:1 (H:V) to 2:1 (H:V), require a minimum of 2 staples/yd². Moderate slopes, 2:1 (H:V) to 3:1 (H:V), require a minimum of 1 1/2 staples/yd². Check manufacturer's specifications to determine if a higher density staple pattern is required.

Installation in Channels
Installation should be in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. In general, these will be as follows:

- Dig initial anchor trench 12 in. deep and 6 in. wide across the channel at the lower end of the project area.
- Excavate intermittent check slots, 6 in. deep and 6 in. wide across the channel at 25 to 30 ft intervals along the channels.
- Cut longitudinal channel anchor trenches 4 in. deep and 4 in. wide along each side of the installation to bury edges of matting, whenever possible extend matting 2 to 3 in. above the crest of the channel side slopes.
- Beginning at the downstream end and in the center of the channel, place the initial end of the first roll in the anchor trench and secure with fastening devices at 12 in. intervals. Note: matting will initially be upside down in anchor trench.
- In the same manner, position adjacent rolls in anchor trench, overlapping the preceding roll a minimum of 3 in.
- Secure these initial ends of mats with anchors at 12 in. intervals, backfill and compact soil.
- Unroll center strip of matting upstream. Stop at next check slot or terminal anchor trench. Unroll adjacent mats upstream in similar fashion, maintaining a 3 in. overlap.
Geotextiles and Mats

- Fold and secure all rolls of matting snugly into all transverse check slots. Lay mat in the bottom of the slot then fold back against itself. Anchor through both layers of mat at 12 in. intervals, then backfill and compact soil. Continue rolling all mat widths upstream to the next check slot or terminal anchor trench.

- Alternate method for non-critical installations: Place two rows of anchors on 6 in. centers at 25 to 30 ft. intervals in lieu of excavated check slots.

- Staple shingled lap spliced ends a minimum of 12 in. apart on 12 in. intervals.

- Place edges of outside mats in previously excavated longitudinal slots; anchor using prescribed staple pattern, backfill, and compact soil.

- Anchor, fill, and compact upstream end of mat in a 12 in. by 6 in. terminal trench.

- Secure mat to ground surface using U-shaped wire staples, geotextile pins, or wooden stakes.

- Seed and fill turf reinforcement matting with soil, if specified.

**Soil Filling (if specified for turf reinforcement mat (TRM))**
Installation should be in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations. Typical installation guidelines are as follows:

- After seeding, spread and lightly rake 1/2-3/4 inches of fine topsoil into the TRM apertures to completely fill TRM thickness. Use backside of rake or other flat implement.

- Alternatively, if allowed by product specifications, spread topsoil using lightweight loader, backhoe, or other power equipment. Avoid sharp turns with equipment.

- Always consult the manufacturer’s recommendations for installation.

- Do not drive tracked or heavy equipment over mat.

- Avoid any traffic over matting if loose or wet soil conditions exist.

- Use shovels, rakes, or brooms for fine grading and touch up.

- Smooth out soil filling just exposing top netting of mat.

**Temporary Soil Stabilization Removal**
- Temporary soil stabilization removed from the site of the work must be disposed of if necessary.

**Costs**
Installed costs can be relatively high compared to other BMPs. Approximate costs for installed materials are shown below:
# Geotextiles and Mats

## Rolled Erosion Control Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jute Mesh</td>
<td>$6,000-$7,000</td>
<td>$6,600-$7,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curled Wood Fiber</td>
<td>$8,000-$10,500</td>
<td>$8,800-$11,050</td>
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<td>Straw</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Coconut Fiber Mesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straw Coconut Fiber</td>
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<td>$11,000-$13,200</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic Netting</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Synthetic Fiber with Netting</td>
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<td>$37,400-$44,000</td>
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<td>Bonded Synthetic Fibers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Combination with Biodegradable</td>
<td>$30,000-$36,000</td>
<td>$33,000-$39,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. 2009 costs reflect a 10% escalation over year 2000 costs. Escalation based on informal survey of industry trends. Note: Expected cost increase is offset by competitive economic conditions.

## Inspection and Maintenance

- RECPs must be inspected in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.

- Areas where erosion is evident shall be repaired and BMPs reapplied as soon as possible. Care should be exercised to minimize the damage to protected areas while making repairs, as any area damaged will require reaplication of BMPs.

- If washout or breakage occurs, re-install the material after repairing the damage to the slope or channel.

- Make sure matting is uniformly in contact with the soil.

- Check that all the lap joints are secure.

- Check that staples are flush with the ground.

## References

Erosion and Sediment Control Manual, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, February 2005


Geotextiles and Mats


Geotextiles and Mats

ISOMETRIC VIEW

TYPICAL SLOPE
SOIL STABILIZATION
NTS

WET SLOPE LINING
NTS

NOTES:
1. Slope surface shall be free of rocks, clods, sticks, and grass. Mats/blankets shall have good soil contact.
2. Lay blankets loosely and stake or staple to maintain direct contact with the soil. Do not stretch.
3. Install per manufacturer’s recommendations

TYPICAL INSTALLATION DETAIL
Geotextiles and Mats

INITIAL CHANNEL ANCHOR TRENCH

TERMINAL SLOPE AND CHANNEL ANCHOR TRENCH

Stake at 3' to 5' intervals

ISOMETRIC VIEW

Check slot at 25'-30' intervals

LONGITUDINAL ANCHOR TRENCH

NOTES:
1. Check slots to be constructed per manufacturers specifications.
2. Staking or staking layout per manufacturers specifications.
3. Install per manufacturer’s recommendations

TYPICAL INSTALLATION DETAIL
Wood Mulching

Description and Purpose
Wood mulching consists of applying a mixture of shredded wood mulch, bark or compost to disturbed soils. The primary function of wood mulching is to reduce erosion by protecting bare soil from rainfall impact, increasing infiltration, and reducing runoff.

Suitable Applications
Wood mulching is suitable for disturbed soil areas requiring temporary protection until permanent stabilization is established.

Limitations
- Not suitable for use on slopes steeper than 3:1 (H:V). Best suited to flat areas or gentle slopes or 5:1 (H:V) or flatter.
- Wood mulch and compost may introduce unwanted species.
- Not suitable for areas exposed to concentrated flows.
- May need to be removed prior to further earthwork.

Implementation

Mulch Selection
There are many types of mulches. Selection of the appropriate type of mulch should be based on the type of application, site conditions, and compatibility with planned or future uses.

Application Procedures
Prior to application, after existing vegetation has been
Wood Mulching

removed, roughen embankment and fill areas by rolling with a device such as a punching type roller or by track walking. The construction application procedures for mulches vary significantly depending upon the type of mulching method specified. Two methods are highlighted here:

- Green Material: This type of mulch is produced by the recycling of vegetation trimmings such as grass, shredded shrubs, and trees. Methods of application are generally by hand although pneumatic methods are available.
  - Green material can be used as a temporary ground cover with or without seeding.
  - The green material should be evenly distributed on site to a depth of not more than 2 in.

- Shredded Wood: Suitable for ground cover in ornamental or revegetated plantings.
  - Shredded wood/bark is conditionally suitable. See note under limitations.
  - Distribute by hand or use pneumatic methods.
  - Evenly distribute the mulch across the soil surface to a depth of 2 to 3 in.

- Avoid mulch placement onto roads, sidewalks, drainage channels, existing vegetation, etc.

Costs
Average annual cost for installation and maintenance (3-4 months useful life) is around $4,000 per acre, but cost can increase if the source is not close to the project site.

Inspection and Maintenance
- Inspect BMPs prior to forecast rain, daily during extended rain events, after rain events, weekly during the rainy season, and at two-week intervals during the non-rainy season.

- Areas where erosion is evident shall be repaired and BMPs reapplied as soon as possible. Care should be exercised to minimize the damage to protected areas while making repairs, as any area damaged will require reapplication of BMPs.

- Regardless of the mulching technique selected, the key consideration in inspection and maintenance is that the mulch needs to last long enough to achieve erosion control objectives. If the mulch is applied as a stand alone erosion control method over disturbed areas (without seed), it should last the length of time the site will remain barren or until final re-grading and revegetation.

- Where vegetation is not the ultimate cover, such as ornamental and landscape applications of bark or wood chips, inspection and maintenance should focus on longevity and integrity of the mulch.

- Reapply mulch when bare earth becomes visible.
References


Earth Dikes and Drainage Swales

Description and Purpose
An earth dike is a temporary berm or ridge of compacted soil used to divert runoff or channel water to a desired location. A drainage swale is a shaped and sloped depression in the soil surface used to convey runoff to a desired location. Earth dikes and drainage swales are used to divert off site runoff around the construction site, divert runoff from stabilized areas and disturbed areas, and direct runoff into sediment basins or traps.

Suitable Applications
Earth dikes and drainage swales are suitable for use, individually or together, where runoff needs to be diverted from one area and conveyed to another.

- Earth dikes and drainage swales may be used:
  - To convey surface runoff down sloping land
  - To intercept and divert runoff to avoid sheet flow over sloped surfaces
  - To divert and direct runoff towards a stabilized watercourse, drainage pipe or channel
  - To intercept runoff from paved surfaces
  - Below steep grades where runoff begins to concentrate
  - Along roadways and facility improvements subject to flood drainage

Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Erosion Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Sediment Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Tracking Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE</td>
<td>Wind Erosion Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Non-Stormwater Management Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WM</td>
<td>Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Primary Objective
- Secondary Objective

Targeted Constituents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted Constituents</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sediment</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrients</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bacteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil and Grease</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organics</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Potential Alternatives

None
Earth Dikes and Drainage Swales

- At the top of slopes to divert runon from adjacent or undisturbed slopes
- At bottom and mid slope locations to intercept sheet flow and convey concentrated flows
- Divert sediment laden runoff into sediment basins or traps

**Limitations**

Dikes should not be used for drainage areas greater than 10 acres or along slopes greater than 10 percent. For larger areas more permanent drainage structures should be built. All drainage structures should be built in compliance with local municipal requirements.

- Earth dikes may create more disturbed area on site and become barriers to construction equipment.
- Earth dikes must be stabilized immediately, which adds cost and maintenance concerns.
- Diverted stormwater may cause downstream flood damage.
- Dikes should not be constructed of soils that may be easily eroded.
- Regrading the site to remove the dike may add additional cost.
- Temporary drains and swales or any other diversion of runoff should not adversely impact upstream or downstream properties.
- Temporary drains and swales must conform to local floodplain management requirements.
- Earth dikes/drainage swales are not suitable as sediment trapping devices.
- It may be necessary to use other soil stabilization and sediment controls such as check dams, plastics, and blankets, to prevent scour and erosion in newly graded dikes, swales, and ditches.
- Sediment accumulation, scour depressions, and/or persistent non-stormwater discharges can result in areas of standing water suitable for mosquito production in drainage swales.

**Implementation**

The temporary earth dike is a berm or ridge of compacted soil, located in such a manner as to divert stormwater to a sediment trapping device or a stabilized outlet, thereby reducing the potential for erosion and offsite sedimentation. Earth dikes can also be used to divert runoff from off-site and from undisturbed areas away from disturbed areas and to divert sheet flows away from unprotected slopes.

An earth dike does not itself control erosion or remove sediment from runoff. A dike prevents erosion by directing runoff to an erosion control device such as a sediment trap or directing runoff away from an erodible area. Temporary diversion dikes should not adversely impact adjacent properties and must conform to local floodplain management regulations, and should not be used in areas with slopes steeper than 10%.

Slopes that are formed during cut and fill operations should be protected from erosion by runoff. A combination of a temporary drainage swale and an earth dike at the top of a slope can divert...
Earth Dikes and Drainage Swales EC-9

runoff to a location where it can be brought to the bottom of the slope (see EC-11, Slope Drains). A combination dike and swale is easily constructed by a single pass of a bulldozer or grader and compacted by a second pass of the tracks or wheels over the ridge. Diversion structures should be installed when the site is initially graded and remain in place until post construction BMPs are installed and the slopes are stabilized.

Diversion practices concentrate surface runoff, increasing its velocity and erosive force. Thus, the flow out of the drain or swale must be directed onto a stabilized area or into a grade stabilization structure. If significant erosion will occur, a swale should be stabilized using vegetation, chemical treatment, rock rip-rap, matting, or other physical means of stabilization. Any drain or swale that conveys sediment laden runoff must be diverted into a sediment basin or trap before it is discharged from the site.

General
- Care must be applied to correctly size and locate earth dikes, drainage swales. Excessively steep, unlined dikes, and swales are subject to erosion and gully formation.
- Conveyances should be stabilized.
- Use a lined ditch for high flow velocities.
- Select flow velocity based on careful evaluation of the risks due to erosion of the measure, soil types, overtopping, flow backups, washout, and drainage flow patterns for each project site.
- Compact any fills to prevent unequal settlement.
- Do not divert runoff onto other property without securing written authorization from the property owner.
- When possible, install and utilize permanent dikes, swales, and ditches early in the construction process.
- Provide stabilized outlets.

Earth Dikes
Temporary earth dikes are a practical, inexpensive BMP used to divert stormwater runoff. Temporary diversion dikes should be installed in the following manner:
- All dikes should be compacted by earth moving equipment.
- All dikes should have positive drainage to an outlet.
- All dikes should have 2:1 or flatter side slopes, 18 in. minimum height, and a minimum top width of 24 in. Wide top widths and flat slopes are usually needed at crossings for construction traffic.
- The outlet from the earth dike must function with a minimum of erosion. Runoff should be conveyed to a sediment trapping device such as a Sediment Trap (SE-3) or Sediment Basin.
Earth Dikes and Drainage Swales

(SE-2) when either the dike channel or the drainage area above the dike are not adequately stabilized.

- Temporary stabilization may be achieved using seed and mulching for slopes less than 5% and either rip-rap or sod for slopes in excess of 5%. In either case, stabilization of the earth dike should be completed immediately after construction or prior to the first rain.

- If riprap is used to stabilize the channel formed along the toe of the dike, the following typical specifications apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel Grade</th>
<th>Riprap Stabilization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5-1.0%</td>
<td>4 in. Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1-2.0%</td>
<td>6 in. Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1-4.0%</td>
<td>8 in. Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1-5.0%</td>
<td>8 in. -12 in. Riprap</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The stone riprap, recycled concrete, etc. used for stabilization should be pressed into the soil with construction equipment.

- Filter cloth may be used to cover dikes in use for long periods.

- Construction activity on the earth dike should be kept to a minimum.

**Drainage Swales**

Drainage swales are only effective if they are properly installed. Swales are more effective than dikes because they tend to be more stable. The combination of a swale with a dike on the downhill side is the most cost effective diversion.

Standard engineering design criteria for small open channel and closed conveyance systems should be used (see the local drainage design manual). Unless local drainage design criteria state otherwise, drainage swales should be designed as follows:

- No more than 5 acres may drain to a temporary drainage swale.

- Place drainage swales above or below, not on, a cut or fill slope.

- Swale bottom width should be at least 2 ft.

- Depth of the swale should be at least 18 in.

- Side slopes should be 2:1 or flatter.

- Drainage or swales should be laid at a grade of at least 1 percent, but not more than 15 percent.

- The swale must not be overtopped by the peak discharge from a 10-year storm, irrespective of the design criteria stated above.
Earth Dikes and Drainage Swales  

- Remove all trees, stumps, obstructions, and other objectionable material from the swale when it is built.
- Compact any fill material along the path of the swale.
- Stabilize all swales immediately. Seed and mulch swales at a slope of less than 5 percent, and use rip-rap or sod for swales with a slope between 5 and 15 percent. For temporary swales, geotextiles and mats (EC-7) may provide immediate stabilization.
- Irrigation may be required to establish sufficient vegetation to prevent erosion.
- Do not operate construction vehicles across a swale unless a stabilized crossing is provided.
- Permanent drainage facilities must be designed by a professional engineer (see the local drainage design criteria for proper design).
- At a minimum, the drainage swale should conform to predevelopment drainage patterns and capacities.
- Construct the drainage swale with a positive grade to a stabilized outlet.
- Provide erosion protection or energy dissipation measures if the flow out of the drainage swale can reach an erosive velocity.

Costs
- Cost ranges from $15 to $55 per ft for both earthwork and stabilization and depends on availability of material, site location, and access.
- Small dikes: $2.50 - $6.50/linear ft; Large dikes: $2.50/yd³.
- The cost of a drainage swale increases with drainage area and slope. Typical swales for controlling internal erosion are inexpensive, as they are quickly formed during routine earthwork.

Inspection and Maintenance
- Inspect BMPs prior to forecast rain, daily during extended rain events, after rain events, weekly during the rainy season, and at two-week intervals during the non-rainy season.
- Inspect BMPs subject to non-stormwater discharges daily while non-stormwater discharges occur.
- Inspect ditches and berms for washouts. Replace lost riprap, damaged linings or soil stabilizers as needed.
- Inspect channel linings, embankments, and beds of ditches and berms for erosion and accumulation of debris and sediment. Remove debris and sediment and repair linings and embankments as needed.
- Temporary conveyances should be completely removed as soon as the surrounding drainage area has been stabilized or at the completion of construction.
Earth Dikes and Drainage Swales  EC-9

References


Earth Dikes and Drainage Swales

TYPICAL DRAINAGE SWALE
NOT TO SCALE

NOTES:
1. Stabilize inlet, outlets and slopes.
2. Properly compact the subgrade.

TYPICAL EARTH DIKE
NOT TO SCALE
Velocity Dissipation Devices

Description and Purpose
Outlet protection is a physical device composed of rock, grouted riprap, or concrete rubble, which is placed at the outlet of a pipe or channel to prevent scour of the soil caused by concentrated, high velocity flows.

Suitable Applications
Whenever discharge velocities and energies at the outlets of culverts, conduits, or channels are sufficient to erode the next downstream reach. This includes temporary diversion structures to divert runoff during construction.

- These devices may be used at the following locations:
  - Outlets of pipes, drains, culverts, slope drains, diversion ditches, swales, conduits, or channels.
  - Outlets located at the bottom of mild to steep slopes.
  - Discharge outlets that carry continuous flows of water.
  - Outlets subject to short, intense flows of water, such as flash floods.
  - Points where lined conveyances discharge to unlined conveyances

Limitations
- Large storms or high flows can wash away the rock outlet protection and leave the area susceptible to erosion.
Velocity Dissipation Devices

- Sediment captured by the rock outlet protection may be difficult to remove without removing the rock.

- Outlet protection may negatively impact the channel habitat.

- Grouted riprap may break up in areas of freeze and thaw.

- If there is not adequate drainage, and water builds up behind grouted riprap, it may cause the grouted riprap to break up due to the resulting hydrostatic pressure.

- Sediment accumulation, scour depressions, and/or persistent non-stormwater discharges can result in areas of standing water suitable for mosquito production in velocity dissipation devices.

Implementation

**General**

Outlet protection is needed where discharge velocities and energies at the outlets of culverts, conduits or channels are sufficient to erode the immediate downstream reach. This practice protects the outlet from developing small eroded pools (plunge pools), and protects against gully erosion resulting from scouring at a culvert mouth.

**Design and Layout**

As with most channel design projects, depth of flow, roughness, gradient, side slopes, discharge rate, and velocity should be considered in the outlet design. Compliance to local and state regulations should also be considered while working in environmentally sensitive streambeds. General recommendations for rock size and length of outlet protection mat are shown in the rock outlet protection figure in this BMP and should be considered minimums. The apron length and rock size gradation are determined using a combination of the discharge pipe diameter and estimated discharge rate: Select the longest apron length and largest rock size suggested by the pipe size and discharge rate. Where flows are conveyed in open channels such as ditches and swales, use the estimated discharge rate for selecting the apron length and rock size. Flows should be same as the culvert or channel design flow but never less than the peak 5 year flow for temporary structures planned for one rainy season, or the 10 year peak flow for temporary structures planned for two or three rainy seasons.

- There are many types of energy dissipaters, with rock being the one that is represented in the attached figure.

- Best results are obtained when sound, durable, and angular rock is used.

- Install riprap, grouted riprap, or concrete apron at selected outlet. Riprap aprons are best suited for temporary use during construction. Grouted or wired tied rock riprap can minimize maintenance requirements.

- Rock outlet protection is usually less expensive and easier to install than concrete aprons or energy dissipaters. It also serves to trap sediment and reduce flow velocities.

- Carefully place riprap to avoid damaging the filter fabric.
Velocity Dissipation Devices

- Stone 4 in. to 6 in. may be carefully dumped onto filter fabric from a height not to exceed 12 in.
- Stone 8 in. to 12 in. must be hand placed onto filter fabric, or the filter fabric may be covered with 4 in. of gravel and the 8 in. to 12 in. rock may be dumped from a height not to exceed 16 in.
- Stone greater than 12 in. shall only be dumped onto filter fabric protected with a layer of gravel with a thickness equal to one half the D₉₀ rock size, and the dump height limited to twice the depth of the gravel protection layer thickness.

- For proper operation of apron: Align apron with receiving stream and keep straight throughout its length. If a curve is needed to fit site conditions, place it in upper section of apron.
- Outlets on slopes steeper than 10 percent should have additional protection.

Costs
Costs are low if material is readily available. If material is imported, costs will be higher. Average installed cost is $150 per device.

Inspection and Maintenance
- Inspect BMPs prior to forecast rain, daily during extended rain events, after rain events, weekly during the rainy season, and at two-week intervals during the non-rainy season.
- Inspect BMPs subjected to non-stormwater discharges daily while non-stormwater discharges occur. Minimize areas of standing water by removing sediment blockages and filling scour depressions.
- Inspect apron for displacement of the riprap and damage to the underlying fabric. Repair fabric and replace riprap that has washed away. If riprap continues to wash away, consider using larger material.
- Inspect for scour beneath the riprap and around the outlet. Repair damage to slopes or underlying filter fabric immediately.
- Temporary devices should be completely removed as soon as the surrounding drainage area has been stabilized or at the completion of construction.

References
County of Sacramento Improvement Standards, Sacramento County, May 1989.
Handbook of Steel Drainage & Highway Construction, American Iron and Steel Institute, 1983.


# Velocity Dissipation Devices

![Plan View Diagram](image)

**PLAN VIEW**

![Section A-A Diagram](image)

**SECTION A-A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pipe Diameter inches</th>
<th>Discharge ft³/s</th>
<th>Apron Length, La ft</th>
<th>Rip Rap D₅₀ Diameter Min inches</th>
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For larger or higher flows consult a Registered Civil Engineer

Source: USDA - SCS
Slope Drains

Description and Purpose
A slope drain is a pipe used to intercept and direct surface runoff or groundwater into a stabilized watercourse, trapping device, or stabilized area. Slope drains are used with earth dikes and drainage ditches to intercept and direct surface flow away from slope areas to protect cut or fill slopes.

Suitable Applications
- Where concentrated flow of surface runoff must be conveyed down a slope in order to prevent erosion.
- Drainage for top of slope diversion dikes or swales.
- Drainage for top of cut and fill slopes where water can accumulate.
- Emergency spillway for a sediment basin.

Limitations
Installation is critical for effective use of the pipe slope drain to minimize potential gully erosion.

- Maximum drainage area per slope drain is 10 acres. (For large areas use a paved chute, rock lined channel, or additional pipes.)
- Severe erosion may result when slope drains fail by overtopping, piping, or pipe separation.
  - During large storms, pipe slope drains may become clogged or over charged, forcing water around the pipe.

Legend:
☑ Primary Objective
☒ Secondary Objective

Targeted Constituents
Sediment ☑
Nutrients
Trash
Metals
Bacteria
Oil and Grease
Organics

Potential Alternatives
EC-8 Earth Dike, Drainage Swales
and causing extreme slope erosion.

- If the sectional downdrain is not sized correctly, the runoff can spill over the drain sides causing gully erosion and potential failure of the structure.

- Dissipation of high flow velocities at the pipe outlet is required to avoid downstream erosion.

- Sediment accumulation, scour depressions, and/or persistent non-stormwater discharges can result in areas of standing water suitable for mosquito production in energy dissipators associated with slope drain outlets.

Implementation

General

The slope drain is applicable for any construction site where concentrated surface runoff can accumulate and must be conveyed down the slope in order to prevent erosion. The slope drain is effective because it prevents the stormwater from flowing directly down the slope by confining all the runoff into an enclosed pipe or channel. Due to the time lag between grading slopes and installation of permanent stormwater collection systems and slope stabilization measures, temporary provisions to intercept runoff are sometimes necessary. Particularly in steep terrain, slope drains can protect unstabilized areas from erosion.

Installation

The slope drain may be a rigid pipe, such as corrugated metal, a flexible conduit, or a lined terrace drain with the inlet placed on the top of a slope and the outlet at the bottom of the slope. This BMP typically is used in combination with a diversion control, such as an earth dike or drainage swale at the top of the slope.

The following criteria must be considered when siting slope drains.

- Permanent structures included in the project plans can often serve as construction BMPs if implemented early. However, the permanent structure must meet or exceed the criteria for the temporary structure.

- Inlet structures must be securely entrenched and compacted to avoid severe gully erosion.

- Slope drains must be securely anchored to the slope and must be adequately sized to carry the capacity of the design storm and associated forces.

- Outlets must be stabilized with riprap, concrete or other type of energy dissipator, or directed into a stable sediment trap or basin. See EC-10, Velocity Dissipation Devices.

- Debris racks are recommended at the inlet. Debris racks located several feet upstream of the inlet can usually be larger than racks at the inlet, and thus provide enhanced debris protection and less plugging.

- Safety racks are also recommended at the inlet and outlet of pipes where children or animals could become entrapped.

- Secure inlet and surround with dikes to prevent gully erosion and anchor pipe to slope.
Slope Drains

- When using slope drains, limit drainage area to 10 acres per pipe. For larger areas, use a rock lined channel or a series of pipes.

- Size to convey at least the peak flow of a 10-year storm. The design storm is conservative due to the potential impact of system failures.

- Maximum slope generally limited to 2:1 (H:V) as energy dissipation below steeper slopes is difficult.

- Direct surface runoff to slope drains with interceptor dikes. See BMP EC-9, Earth Dikes and Drainage Swales. Top of interceptor dikes should be 12 in. higher than the top of the slope drain.

- Slope drains can be placed on or buried underneath the slope surface.

- Recommended materials include both metal and plastic pipe, either corrugated or smooth wall. Concrete pipe can also be used.

- When installing slope drains:
  - Install slope drains perpendicular to slope contours.
  - Compact soil around and under entrance, outlet, and along length of pipe.
  - Securely anchor and stabilize pipe and appurtenances into soil.
  - Check to ensure that pipe connections are watertight.
  - Protect area around inlet with filter cloth. Protect outlet with riprap or other energy dissipation device. For high energy discharges, reinforce riprap with concrete or use reinforced concrete device.
  - Protect outlet of slope drains using a flared end section when outlet discharges to a flexible energy dissipation device.
  - A flared end section installed at the inlet will improve flow into the slope drain and prevent erosion at the pipe entrance. Use a flared end section with a 6 in. minimum toe plate to help prevent undercutting. The flared section should slope towards the pipe inlet.

Design and Layout

The capacity for temporary drains should be sufficient to convey at least the peak runoff from a 10-year rainfall event. The pipe size may be computed using the Rational Method or a method established by the local municipality. Higher flows must be safely stored or routed to prevent any offsite concentration of flow and any erosion of the slope. The design storm is purposely conservative due to the potential impacts associated with system failures.

As a guide, temporary pipe slope drains should not be sized smaller than shown in the following table:
Slope Drains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Pipe Diameter (Inches)</th>
<th>Maximum Drainage Area (Acres)</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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Larger drainage areas can be treated if the area can be subdivided into areas of 10 acres or less and each area is treated as a separate drainage. Drainage areas exceeding 10 acres must be designed by a Registered Civil Engineer and approved by the agency that issued the grading permit.

**Materials:**

Soil type, rainfall patterns, construction schedule, local requirements, and available supply are some of the factors to be considered when selecting materials. The following types of slope drains are commonly used:

- **Rigid Pipe**: This type of slope drain is also known as a pipe drop. The pipe usually consists of corrugated metal pipe or rigid plastic pipe. The pipe is placed on undisturbed or compacted soil and secured onto the slope surface or buried in a trench. Concrete thrust blocks must be used when warranted by the calculated thrust forces. Collars should be properly installed and secured with metal strappings or watertight collars.

- **Flexible Pipe**: The flexible pipe slope drain consists of a flexible tube of heavy duty plastic, rubber, or composite material. The tube material is securely anchored onto the slope surface. The tube should be securely fastened to the metal inlet and outlet conduit sections with metal strappings or watertight collars.

- **Section Downdrains**: The section downdrain consists of pre-fabricated, section conduit of half round or third round material. The sectional downdrain performs similar to a flume or chute. The pipe must be placed on undisturbed or compacted soil and secured into the slope.

- **Concrete-lined Terrace Drain**: This is a concrete channel for draining water from a terrace on a slope to the next level. These drains are typically specified as permanent structures and if installed early, can serve as slope drains during construction, which should be designed according to local drainage design criteria.

**Costs**

- Cost varies based on pipe selection and selected outlet protection.
Slope Drains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corrugated Steel Pipes, Per Foot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<th>PVC Pipes, Per Foot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
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<td>24&quot;</td>
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</table>

**Inspection and Maintenance**

- Inspect BMPs prior to forecast rain, daily during extended rain events, after rain events, weekly during the rainy season, and at two-week intervals during the non-rainy season.

- Inspect BMPs subjected to non-stormwater discharges daily while non-stormwater discharges occur. Minimize areas of standing water by removing sediment blockages and filling scour depressions.

- Inspect outlet for erosion and downstream scour. If eroded, repair damage and install additional energy dissipation measures. If downstream scour is occurring, it may be necessary to reduce flows being discharged into the channel unless other preventative measures are implemented.

- Insert inlet for clogging or undercutting. Remove debris from inlet to maintain flows. Repair undercutting at inlet and if needed, install flared section or rip rap around the inlet to prevent further undercutting.

- Inspect pipes for leakage. Repair leaks and restore damaged slopes.

- Inspect slope drainage for accumulations of debris and sediment.
- Remove built up sediment from entrances and outlets as required. Flush drains if necessary; capture and settle out sediment from discharge.

- Make sure water is not ponding onto inappropriate areas (e.g., active traffic lanes, material storage areas, etc.).

- Pipe anchors must be checked to ensure that the pipe remains anchored to the slope. Install additional anchors if pipe movement is detected.

**References**


TYPICAL SLOPE DRAIN
NOT TO SCALE
Streambank Stabilization

Description and Purpose
Stream channels, streambanks, and associated riparian areas are dynamic and sensitive ecosystems that respond to changes in land use activity. Streambank and channel disturbance resulting from construction activities can increase the stream’s sediment load, which can cause channel erosion or sedimentation and have adverse affects on the biotic system. BMPs can reduce the discharge of sediment and other pollutants to minimize the impact of construction activities on watercourses. Streams on the 303(d) list and listed for sediment may require numerous measures to prevent any increases in sediment load to the stream.

Suitable Applications
These procedures typically apply to all construction projects that disturb or occur within stream channels and their associated riparian areas.

Limitations
Specific permit requirements or mitigation measures such as Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) 401 Certification, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit and approval by California Department of Fish and Game supercede the guidance in this BMP.

- If numerical based water quality standards are mentioned in any of these and other related permits, testing and sampling may be required. Streams listed as 303(d) impaired for sediment, silt, or turbidity, are required to
conduct sampling to verify that there is no net increase in sediment load due to construction activities.

**Implementation**

**Planning**
- Proper planning, design, and construction techniques can minimize impacts normally associated with stream construction activities. Poor planning can adversely affect soil, fish, wildlife resources, land uses, or land users. Planning should take into account: scheduling; avoidance of in-stream construction; minimizing disturbance area and construction time period; using pre-disturbed areas; selecting crossing location; and selecting equipment.

**Scheduling**
- Construction activities should be scheduled according to the relative sensitivity of the environmental concerns and in accordance with EC-1, Scheduling. Scheduling considerations will be different when working near perennial streams vs. ephemeral streams and are as follows.

- When in-stream construction is conducted in a perennial stream, work should optimally be performed during the rainy season. This is because in the summer, any sediment-containing water that is discharged into the watercourse will cause a large change in both water clarity and water chemistry. During the rainy season, there is typically more and faster flowing water in the stream so discharges are diluted faster. However, should in-stream work be scheduled for summer, establishing an isolation area, or diverting the stream, will significantly decrease the amount of sediment stirred up by construction work. Construction work near perennial streams should optimally be performed during the dry season (see below).

- When working in or near ephemeral streams, work should be performed during the dry season. By their very nature, ephemeral streams are usually dry in the summer, and therefore, in-stream construction activities will not cause significant water quality problems. However, when tying up the site at the end of the project, wash any fines (see Washing Fines) that accumulated in the channel back into the bed material, to decrease pollution from the first rainstorm of the season.

- When working near ephemeral or perennial streams, erosion and sediment controls (see silt fences, straw bale barriers, etc.) should be implemented to keep sediment out of stream channel.

**Minimize Disturbance**
- Minimize disturbance through: selection of the narrowest crossing location; limiting the number of equipment trips across a stream during construction; and, minimizing the number and size of work areas (equipment staging areas and spoil storage areas). Place work areas at least 50 ft from stream channel. Field reconnaissance should be conducted during the planning stage to identify work areas.

**Use of Pre-Disturbed Areas**
- Locate project sites and work areas in areas disturbed by prior construction or other activity when possible.
Streambank Stabilization

Selection of Project Site
- Avoid steep and unstable banks, highly erodible or saturated soils, or highly fractured rock.
- Select project site that minimizes disturbance to aquatic species or habitat.

Equipment Selection
- Select equipment that reduces the amount of pressure exerted on the ground surface, and therefore, reduces erosion potential and/or use overhead or aerial access for transporting equipment across drainage channels. Use equipment that exerts ground pressures of less than 5 or 6 lb/in², where possible. Low ground pressure equipment includes: wide or high flotation tires (34 to 72 in. wide); dual tires; bogie axle systems; tracked machines; lightweight equipment; and, central tire inflation systems.

Streambank Stabilization

Preservation of Existing Vegetation
- Preserve existing vegetation in accordance with EC-2, Preservation of Existing Vegetation. In a streambank environment, preservation of existing vegetation provides the following benefits.

Water Quality Protection
- Vegetated buffers on slopes trap sediment and promote groundwater recharge. The buffer width needed to maintain water quality ranges from 15 to 100 ft. On gradual slopes, most of the filtering occurs within the first 30 ft. Steeper slopes require a greater width of vegetative buffer to provide water quality benefits.

Streambank Stabilization
- The root system of riparian vegetation stabilizes streambanks by increasing tensile strength in the soil. The presence of vegetation modifies the moisture condition of slopes (infiltration, evapo transpiration, interception) and increases bank stability.

Riparian Habitat
- Buffers of diverse riparian vegetation provide food and shelter for riparian and aquatic organisms. Minimizing impacts to fisheries habitat is a major concern when working near streams and rivers. Riparian vegetation provides shade, shelter, organic matter (leaf detritus and large woody debris), and other nutrients that are necessary for fish and other aquatic organisms. Buffer widths for habitat concerns are typically wider than those recommended for water quality concerns (100 to 1500 ft).

- When working near watercourses, it is important to understand the work site's placement in the watershed. Riparian vegetation in headwater streams has a greater impact on overall water quality than vegetation in downstream reaches. Preserving existing vegetation upstream is necessary to maintain water quality, minimize bank failure, and maximize riparian habitat, downstream of the work site.

Limitations
- Local county and municipal ordinances regarding width, extent and type of vegetative buffer required may exceed the specifications provided here; these ordinances should be investigated prior to construction.
Streambank Stabilization

Streambank Stabilization Specific Installation
- As a general rule, the width of a buffer strip between a road and the stream is recommended to be 50 ft plus four times the percent slope of the land, measured between the road and the top of stream bank.

Hydraulic Mulch
- Apply hydraulic mulch on disturbed streambanks above mean high water level in accordance with EC-3, Hydraulic Mulch to provide temporary soil stabilization.

Limitations
- Do not place hydraulic mulch or tackifiers below the mean high water level, as these materials could wash into the channel and impact water quality or possibly cause eutrophication (eutrophication is an algal bloom caused by excessively high nutrient levels in the water).

Hydroseeding
- Hydroseed disturbed streambanks in accordance with EC-4, Hydroseeding.

Limitations
- Do not place tackifiers or fertilizers below the mean high water level, as these materials could wash into the channel and impact water quality or possibly cause eutrophication.

Soil Binders
- Apply soil binders to disturbed streambanks in accordance with EC-5, Soil Binders.

Limitations
- Do not place soil binders below the mean high water level. Soil binder must be environmentally benign and non-toxic to aquatic organisms.

Straw Mulch
- Apply straw mulch to disturbed streambanks in accordance with EC-6, Straw Mulch.

Limitations
- Do not place straw mulch below the mean high water level, as this material could wash into the channel and impact water quality or possibly cause eutrophication.

Geotextiles and Mats
- Install geotextiles and mats as described in EC-7, Geotextiles and Mats, to stabilize disturbed channels and streambanks. Not all applications should be in the channel, for example, certain geotextile netting may snag fish gills and are not appropriate in fish bearing streams. Geotextile fabrics that are not biodegradable are not appropriate for in stream use. Additionally, geotextile fabric or blankets placed in channels must be adequate to sustain anticipated hydraulic forces.

Earth Dikes, Drainage Swales, and Lined Ditches
- Convey, intercept, or divert runoff from disturbed streambanks using EC-9, Earth Dikes and Drainage Swales.
Streambank Stabilization

Limitations

- Do not place earth dikes in watercourses, as these structures are only suited for intercepting sheet flow, and should not be used to intercept concentrated flow.

- Appropriately sized velocity dissipation devices (EC-10) must be placed at outlets to minimize erosion and scour.

Velocity Dissipation Devices

- Place velocity dissipation devices at outlets of pipes, drains, culverts, slope drains, diversion ditches, swales, conduits or channels in accordance with EC-10, Velocity Dissipation Devices.

Slope Drains

- Use slope drains to intercept and direct surface runoff or groundwater into a stabilized watercourse, trapping device or stabilized area in accordance with EC-11, Slope Drains.

Limitations

- Appropriately sized outlet protection and velocity dissipation devices (EC-10) must be placed at outlets to minimize erosion and scour.

Streambank Sediment Control

Silt Fences

- Install silt fences in accordance with SE-1, Silt Fence, to control sediment. Silt fences should only be installed where sediment laden water can pond, thus allowing the sediment to settle out.

Fiber Rolls

- Install fiber rolls in accordance with SE-5, Fiber Rolls, along contour of slopes above the high water level to intercept runoff, reduce flow velocity, release the runoff as sheet flow and provide removal of sediment from the runoff. In a stream environment, fiber rolls should be used in conjunction with other sediment control methods such as SE-1, Silt Fence or SE-9 Straw Bale Barrier. Install silt fence, straw bale barrier, or other erosion control method along toe of slope above the high water level.

Gravel Bag Berm

- A gravel bag berm or barrier can be utilized to intercept and slow the flow of sediment laden sheet flow runoff in accordance with SE-6, Gravel Bag Berm. In a stream environment gravel bag barriers can allow sediment to settle from runoff before water leaves the construction site and can be used to isolate the work area from the live stream.

Limitations

- Gravel bag barriers are not recommended as a perimeter sediment control practice around streams.

Straw Bale Barrier

- Install straw bale barriers in accordance with SE-9, Straw Bale Barrier, to control sediment. Straw bale barriers should only be installed where sediment laden water can pond, thus allowing the sediment to settle out. Install a silt fence in accordance with SE-1, Silt Fence,
Streambank Stabilization  

on down slope side of straw bale barrier closest to stream channel to provide added sediment control.

**Rock Filter**

*Description and Purpose*

Rock filters are temporary erosion control barriers composed of rock that is anchored in place. Rock filters detain the sediment laden runoff, retain the sediment, and release the water as sheet flow at a reduced velocity. Typical rock filter installations are illustrated at the end of this BMP.

**Applications**

- Near the toe of slopes that may be subject to flow and rill erosion.

**Limitations**

- Inappropriate for contributing drainage areas greater than 5 acres.
- Requires sufficient space for ponded water.
- Ineffective for diverting runoff because filters allow water to slowly seep through.
- Rock filter berms are difficult to remove when construction is complete.
- Unsuitable in developed areas or locations where aesthetics is a concern.

**Specifications**

- Rock: open graded rock, 0.75 to 5 in. for concentrated flow applications.
- Woven wire sheathing: 1 in. diameter, hexagonal mesh, galvanized 20gauge (used with rock filters in areas of concentrated flow).
- In construction traffic areas, maximum rock berm heights should be 12 in. Berms should be constructed every 300 ft on slopes less than 5%, every 200 ft on slopes between 5% and 10%, and every 100 ft on slopes greater than 10%.

**Maintenance**

- Inspect and verify that activity-based BMPs are in place prior to the commencement of associated activities. While activities associated with the BMP are under way, inspect weekly during the rainy season and at two-week intervals in the non-rainy season to verify continued BMP implementation.
- Inspect BMPs subject to non-stormwater discharges daily while non-stormwater discharges occur.
- Reshape berms as needed and replace lost or dislodged rock, and filter fabric.
- Sediment that accumulates in the BMP must be periodically removed in order to maintain BMP effectiveness. Sediment should be removed when the sediment accumulation reaches one third of the barrier height. Sediment removed during maintenance may be incorporated into earthwork on the site or disposed at an appropriate location.
Streambank Stabilization

K-rail

Description and Purpose
This is temporary sediment control that uses K-rails to form the sediment deposition area, or to isolate the near bank construction area. Install K-rails at toe of slope in accordance with procedures described in NS-5, Clear Water Diversion.

Barriers are placed end to end in a pre-designed configuration and gravel filled bags are used at the toe of the barrier and at their abutting ends to seal and prevent movement of sediment beneath or through the barrier walls.

Appropriate Applications
- This technique is useful at the toe of embankments, cuts or fills slopes.

Limitations
- The K-rail method should not be used to dewater a project site, as the barrier is not watertight.

Implementation
- Refer to NS-5, Clear Water Diversion, for implementation requirements.

Instream Construction Sediment Control
There are three different options currently available for reducing turbidity while working in a stream or river. The stream can be isolated from the area in which work is occurring by means of a water barrier, the stream can be diverted around the work site through a pipe or temporary channel, or one can employ construction practices that minimize sediment suspension.

Whatever technique is implemented, an important thing to remember is that dilution can sometimes be the solution. A probable “worst time” to release high TSS into a stream system might be when the stream is very low; summer low flow, for example. During these times, the flow may be low while the biological activity in the stream is very high. Conversely, the addition of high TSS or sediment during a big storm discharge might have a relatively low impact, because the stream is already turbid, and the stream energy is capable of transporting both suspended solids, and large quantities of bedload through the system. The optimum time to “pull” in-stream structures may be during the rising limb of a storm hydrograph.

Techniques to minimize Total Suspended Solids (TSS)
- Padding - Padding laid in the stream below the work site may trap some solids that are deposited in the stream during construction. After work is done, the padding is removed from the stream, and placed on the bank to assist in re-vegetation.

- Clean, washed gravel - Using clean, washed gravel decreases solid suspension, as there are fewer small particles deposited in the stream.

- Excavation using a large bucket - Each time a bucket of soil is placed in the stream, a portion is suspended. Approximately the same amount is suspended whether a small amount of soil is placed in the stream, or a large amount. Therefore, using a large excavator bucket instead of a small one, will reduce the total amount of soil that washes downstream.
Streambank Stabilization

- **Use of dozer for backfilling** - Using a dozer for backfilling instead of a backhoe follows the same principles – the fewer times soil is deposited in the stream, the less soil will be suspended.

- **Partial dewatering with a pump** - Partially dewatering a stream with a pump reduces the amount of water, and thus the amount of water that can suspend sediment.

**Washing Fines**

*Definition and Purpose*

- Washing fines is an “in-channel” sediment control method, which uses water, either from a water truck or hydrant, to wash stream fines that were brought to the surface of the channel bed during restoration, back into the interstitial spaces of the gravel and cobbles.

- The purpose of this technique is to reduce or eliminate the discharge of sediment from the channel bottom during the first seasonal flow. Sediment should not be allowed into stream channels; however, occasionally in-channel restoration work will involve moving or otherwise disturbing fines (sand and silt sized particles) that are already in the stream, usually below bankfull discharge elevation. Subsequent re-watering of the channel can result in a plume of turbidity and sedimentation.

- This technique washes the fines back into the channel bed. Bedload materials, including gravel cobbles, boulders and those fines, are naturally mobilized during higher storm flows. This technique is intended to delay the discharge until the fines would naturally be mobilized.

*Appropriate Applications*

- This technique should be used when construction work is required in channels. It is especially useful in intermittent or ephemeral streams in which work is performed “in the dry”, and which subsequently become re-watered.

*Limitations*

- The stream must have sufficient gravel and cobble substrate composition.

- The use of this technique requires consideration of time of year and timing of expected stream flows.

- The optimum time for the use of this technique is in the fall, prior to winter flows.

- Consultation with, and approval from the Department of Fish and Game and the Regional Water Quality Control Board may be required.

*Implementation*

- Apply sufficient water to wash fines, but not cause further erosion or runoff.

- Apply water slowly and evenly to prevent runoff and erosion.

- Consult with Department of Fish and Game and the Regional Water Quality Control Board for specific water quality requirements of applied water (e.g. chlorine).
Streambank Stabilization

Inspection and Maintenance
- None necessary

Costs
Cost may vary according to the combination of practices implemented.

Inspection and Maintenance
- Inspect and verify that activity-based BMPs are in place prior to the commencement of associated activities. While activities associated with the BMP are under way, inspect weekly during the rainy season and at two-week intervals in the non-rainy season to verify continued BMP implementation.
- Inspect BMPs subject to non-stormwater discharges daily while non-stormwater discharges occur.
- Inspect and repair equipment (for damaged hoses, fittings, and gaskets).

References


18 in. for non traffic areas (Max)
12 in. for traffic areas (Max)

SECTION

1 in. to 5 in.
Rock berm

PLAN

1 in. to 5 in.
Rock berm

TYPICAL ROCK FILTER
NOT TO SCALE
Compost Blanket

Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Erosion Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Sediment Control</td>
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<td>NS</td>
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<td>WM</td>
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Legend:
- ☑ Primary Category
- ☐ Secondary Category

Description and Purpose

A compost blanket is applied to slopes and earth disturbed areas to prevent erosion, and in some cases, increase infiltration and/or establish vegetation. The compost blanket can be applied by hand, conveyor system, compost spreader, or pneumatic delivery (blower) system. The blanket thickness is determined from the slope steepness and anticipated precipitation. A compost blanket protects the soil surface from raindrop erosion, particularly rills and gullies that may form under other methods of erosion control.

A compost blanket, if properly installed, can be very successful at vegetation establishment, weed suppression and erosion control. The compost blanket comes into direct contact with the underlying soil, reducing rill formation. Furthermore, compost provides organic matter and nutrients important for vegetation growth. The compost blanket provides soil structure that allows water to infiltrate the soil surface and retain moisture, which also promotes seed germination and vegetation growth, in addition to reducing runoff.

Compost is typically derived from combinations of feedstocks, biosolids, leaf and yard trimmings, manure, wood, or mixed solid waste. Many types of compost are products of municipal recycle or “Greenwaste” programs. Compost is organic and biodegradable and can be left onsite. There are many types of compost with a variety of properties with specific functions, and accordingly, compost selection is an important design consideration in the application of this type of erosion control.
Compost Blanket

Suitable Applications
A compost blanket is appropriate for slopes and earth disturbed areas requiring protection until permanent stabilization is established. A compost blanket can also be used in combination with temporary and/or permanent seeding strategies to enhance plant establishment. Examples include:

- Rough-graded areas that will remain inactive for longer than 14 days
- Soil stockpiles
- Slopes with exposed soil between existing vegetation such as trees or shrubs
- Slopes planted with live, container-grown vegetation
- Disturbed areas where plants are slow to develop

A compost blanket is typically used on slopes of 2:1 (H:V) or gentler. However, a compost blanket can be effective when applied to slopes as steep as 1:1 (H:V) with appropriate design considerations including slope length, blanket thickness, adding components such as a tackifier, or using compost blankets in conjunction with other techniques, such as compost socks and berms or fiber rolls.

Compost can be pre-seeded prior to application to the soil (recommended by the EPA for construction site stormwater runoff control) or seeded after the blanket has been installed. The compost medium can also remove pollutants in stormwater including heavy metals; oil and grease; and hydrocarbons (USEPA, 1998).

Limitations
- Compost can potentially leach nutrients (dissolved phosphorus and nitrogen) into runoff and potentially impact water quality. Compost should not be used directly upstream from nutrient impaired waterbodies (Adams et al., 2008).
- Compost may also contain other undesirable constituents that are detrimental to water quality. Carefully consider the qualifications and experience of any compost producer/supplier.
- A compost blanket applied by hand is more time intensive and potentially costly. Using a pneumatic blower truck is the recommended cost effective method of application.
- When blowers are used, the treatment areas should be within 300 ft of a road or surface capable of supporting trucks.
- Wind may limit application of compost and result in application to undesired locations.
- Compost blankets should not be applied in areas of concentrated flows.
- Steeper slopes may require additional blanket thickness and other stability measures such as using tackifiers or slope interruption devices (compost socks and berms, or fiber rolls). The same applies for sites with high precipitation totals or during the rainy season.
Implementation

- Additional guidance on the comparison and selection of temporary slope stabilization methods is provided in Appendix F of the Handbook.

Compost Materials

- California Compost Regulations (Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Division 7, Chapter 3.1, Article 7, Section 17868.3) define and require a quality of compost for application. Compost should comply with all physical and chemical requirements. Specific requirements are provided in Table 1 below, taken from Caltrans Standard Special Provision 10-1 (SSP 10-1), Erosion Control (Compost Blanket).

- The compost producer should be fully permitted as specified under the California Integrated Waste Management Board, Local Enforcement Agencies and any other State and Local Agencies that regulate Solid Waste Facilities. If exempt from State permitting requirements, the composting facility should certify that it follows guidelines and procedures for production of compost meeting the environmental health standards of Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Division 7, Chapter 3.1, Article 7.

- The compost producer should be a participant in United States Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance program.

- Compost moisture should be considered for composition quality and application purposes. A range of 30-50% is typical. Compost that is too dry is hard to apply and compost that is too wet is more difficult (and more expensive) to transport. For arid or semi-arid areas, or for application during the dry season, use compost with greater moisture content than areas with wetter climates. For wetter or more humid climates or for application during the wet season, drier composts can be used as the compost will absorb moisture from the ambient air.

- Organic content of the compost is also important and should range from 30 to 65% depending on site conditions.

- Compost should be high-quality mature compost. Immature compost can potentially leach nutrients.

- Compost should not be derived from mixed municipal solid waste and should be free of visible contaminants.

- Compost should not contain paint, petroleum products, pesticides or any other chemical residues harmful to animal life or plant growth. Metal concentrations in compost should not exceed the maximum metal concentrations listed under Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Division 7, Chapter 3.1, Section 17868.2.

- Compost should not possess objectionable odors.

- Compost should be weed free.
Compost Blanket

Table 1. Physical/Chemical Requirements of Compost
Reference - Caltrans SSP-10 Erosion Control Blanket (Compost)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Test Method</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pH</td>
<td>*TMECC 04.11-A&lt;br&gt;Elastometric pH 1:5 Slurry Method pH Units</td>
<td>6.0–8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soluble Salts</td>
<td>TMECC 04.10-A&lt;br&gt;Electrical Conductivity 1:5 Slurry Method dS/m (mhos/cm)</td>
<td>0–10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moisture Content</td>
<td>TMECC 03.09-A&lt;br&gt;Total Solids &amp; Moisture at 70+/- 5 deg C % Wet Weight Basis</td>
<td>30–60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Matter Content</td>
<td>TMECC 05.07-A&lt;br&gt;Loss-On-Ignition Organic Matter Method (LOI) % Dry Weight Basis</td>
<td>30–65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>TMECC 05.05-A&lt;br&gt;Germination and Vigor Seed Emergence Seedling Vigor % Relative to Positive Control</td>
<td>80 or Above&lt;br&gt;80 or Above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>TMECC 05.08-B&lt;br&gt;Carbon Dioxide Evolution Rate mg CO₂/Cg OM per day</td>
<td>8 or below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particle Size</td>
<td>TMECC 02.02-B&lt;br&gt;Sample Sieving for Aggregate Size Classification % Dry Weight Basis</td>
<td>100% Passing, 3 inch&lt;br&gt;90–100% Passing, 1 inch&lt;br&gt;65–100% Passing, 3/4 inch&lt;br&gt;0–75% Passing, 1/4 inch&lt;br&gt;Maximum length 6 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathogen</td>
<td>TMECC 07.01-B&lt;br&gt;Fecal Coliform Bacteria &lt; 1000 MPN/gram dry wt.</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathogen</td>
<td>TMECC 07.01-B&lt;br&gt;Salmonella &lt; 3 MPN/gram dry wt.</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Contaminants</td>
<td>TMECC 02.02-C&lt;br&gt;Man Made Inert Removal and Classification: Plastic, Glass and Metal % &gt; 4mm fraction</td>
<td>Combined Total: &lt; 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Contaminants</td>
<td>TMECC 02.02-C&lt;br&gt;Man Made Inert Removal and Classification: Sharps (Sewing needles, straight pins and hypodermic needles) % &gt; 4mm fraction</td>
<td>None Detected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*TMECC refers to "Test Methods for the Examination of Composting and Compost," published by the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Compost Council (USCC).

Installation

- Prior to compost application, prepare the slope by removing loose rocks, roots, stumps, and other debris greater than 2" in diameter. Prepare the slope area surface by scarifying or track walking/roughening if necessary.
- Select method to apply the compost blanket. A pneumatic blower is most cost effective and most adaptive in applying compost to steep, rough terrain, and hard to reach locations.
- A compost blanket thickness of 1" to 4" should be applied to slopes of 2:1 (H:V) or gentler, based on site-specific conditions. Increase blanket thickness with increased slope steepness and/or during installation during the rainy season (for example, 2" to 3" should be used for a
3:1 slope, while 1" to 2" can be used for a 4:1 slope). Erosion control using a compost blanket is not recommended for slopes greater than 1:1 (H:V).

- For steeper slopes, tackifiers should be utilized and/or other stabilization techniques employed. For example, compost socks or berms can be installed at intervals over the compost blanket (in a similar manner as Fiber Rolls, SE-5).

- Compost socks or berms (or equivalent linear sediment control BMP) should be placed at the top and/or bottom of the slope for additional erosion control performance.

- For optimum vegetation establishment, a blanket thickness of 1" to 2" is recommended. If vegetation establishment is not the primary function of the compost blanket, a thicker blanket may be recommended based on slope or rainfall conditions.

- Evenly distribute compost on the soil surface to the desired blanket thickness (1/2" to 4" as calculated prior based on site conditions and objectives). Even distribution is an important factor in preventing future rill and gully erosion.

- The compost blanket should extend 3 to 6 feet over the top of the shoulder of the slope. A compost sock or compost berm can be used at the top of the slope as an auxiliary technique to prevent runoff from flowing underneath the compost blanket.

- Use additional anchoring and erosion control BMPs in conjunction of the compost blanket as needed.

**Costs**
The cost associated with a compost blanket is similar to that of a straw mat and generally less expensive than a geotextile blanket (USEPA, 2009). Caltrans has provided a recent estimate for $5,000 to $8,000 per acre for application of an unseeded 1 inch compost blanket (Caltrans Compost Specifications, 2009). Recently obtained vendor costs indicate that proprietary blends of compost that are seeded and contain a nutrient rich “tackifier” can cost approximately $0.35 per square foot, or approximately $15,000 per acre for a 2 inch blanket. Application by hand is more time intensive and likely more costly.

**Inspection and Maintenance**
- BMPs must be inspected in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.

- Areas where erosion is evident, another layer of compost should be reapplied as soon as possible. It may be necessary to install an additional type of stormwater BMP at the top of slope or as a slope interrupter to control flow, such as a fiber roll (SE-5) or compost sock (SE-11).

- Care should be exercised to minimize the damage to protected areas while making repairs, as any area damaged will require reapplication of BMPs.

- Limit or prohibit foot traffic to minimize damage to BMP or impede vegetation establishment.
References

An Analysis of Composting as an Environmental Remediation Technology, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Solid Waste and Emergency Response (5305W), EPA530-R-8-008, 1998.


Standard Special Provision 10-1, Erosion Control (Compost Blanket), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) 2007 Update.


National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Compost Blankets, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).


Soil Preparation/Roughening involves assessment and preparation of surface soils for BMP installation. This can include soil testing (for seed base, soil characteristics, or nutrients), as well as roughening surface soils by mechanical methods (including sheepfoot rolling, track walking, scarifying, stair stepping, and imprinting) to prepare soil for additional BMPs, or to break up sheet flow. Soil Preparation can also involve tilling topsoil to prepare a seed bed and/or incorporation of soil amendments, to enhance vegetative establishment.

Suitable Applications
Soil preparation: Soil preparation is essential to proper vegetative establishment. In particular, soil preparation (i.e. tilling, raking, and amendment) is suitable for use in combination with any soil stabilization method, including RECPs or sod. Soil preparation should not be confused with roughening.

Roughening: Soil roughening is generally referred to as track walking (sometimes called imprinting) a slope, where treads from heavy equipment run parallel to the contours of the slope and act as mini terraces. Soil preparation is most effective when used in combination with erosion controls. Soil Roughening is suitable for use as a complementary process for controlling erosion on a site. Roughening is not intended to be used as a stand-alone BMP, and should be used with perimeter controls, additional erosion control measures, grade breaks, and vegetative establishment for maximum effectiveness. Roughening is intended to only affect surface soils and should not compromise slope stability or overall compaction. Suitable applications for soil roughening include:
Soil Preparation/Roughening

- Along any disturbed slopes, including temporary stockpiles, sediment basins, or compacted soil diversion berms and swales.

- Roughening should be used in combination with hydraulically applied stabilization methods, compost blanket, or straw mulch, but should not be used in combination with RECPs or sod because roughening is intended to leave terraces on the slope.

Limitations

- Preparation and roughening must take place prior to installing other erosion controls (such as hydraulically applied stabilizers) or sediment controls (such as fiber rolls) on the faces of slopes.

- In such cases where slope preparation is minimal, erosion control/revegetation BMPs that do not require extensive soil preparation - such as hydraulic mulching and seeding applications - should be employed.

- Consideration should be given to the type of erosion control BMP that follows surface preparation, as some BMPs are not designed to be installed over various types of tillage/roughening, i.e., RECPs (erosion control blankets) should not be used with soil roughening due to a “bridging” effect, which suspends the blanket above the seed bed.

- Surface roughness has an effect on the amount of mulch material that needs to be applied, which shows up as a general increase in mulch material due to an increase in surface area (Topographic Index -see EC-3 Hydraulic Mulching).

Implementation

- Additional guidance on the comparison and selection of temporary slope stabilization methods is provided in Appendix F of the Handbook.

General

A roughened surface can significantly reduce erosion. Based on tests done at the San Diego State Erosion Research Laboratory, various roughening techniques on slopes can result in a 12 - 76% reduction in the erosion rate versus smooth slopes.

Materials

Minimal materials are required unless amendments and/or seed are added to the soil. The majority of soil roughening/preparation can be done with equipment that is on hand at a normal construction site, such as bull dozers and compaction equipment.

Installation Guidelines

Soil Preparation

- Where appropriate or feasible, soil should be prepared to receive the seed by diskimg or otherwise scarifying the surface to eliminate crust, improve air and water infiltration and create a more favorable environment for germination and growth.

- Based upon soil testing conducted, apply additional soil amendments (e.g. fertilizers, additional seed) to the soil to help with germination. Follow EC-4, Hydoseeding, when selecting and applying seed and fertilizers.
Soil Preparation/Roughening

Cut Slope Roughening:
- Stair-step grade or groove the cut slopes that are steeper than 3:1.
- Use stair-step grading on any erodible material soft enough to be ripped with a bulldozer. Slopes consisting of soft rock with some subsoil are particularly suited to stair-step grading.
- Make the vertical cut distance less than the horizontal distance, and slightly slope the horizontal position of the "step" in toward the vertical wall.
- Do not make individual vertical cuts more than 2 feet (0.6 m) high in soft materials or more than 3 feet (0.9 m) high in rocky materials.
- Groove the slope using machinery to create a series of ridges and depressions that run across the slope, on the contour.

Fill Slope Roughening:
- Place on fill slopes with a gradient steeper than 3:1 in lifts not to exceed 8 inches (0.2 m), and make sure each lift is properly compacted.
- Ensure that the face of the slope consists of loose, uncompacted fill 4-6 inches (0.1-0.2 m) deep.
- Use grooving or tracking to roughen the face of the slopes, if necessary.
- Do not blade or scrape the final slope face.

Roughening for Slopes to be Mowed:
- Slopes which require mowing activities should not be steeper than 3:1.
- Roughen these areas to shallow grooves by track walking, scarifying, sheepsfoot rolling, or imprinting.
- Make grooves close together (less than 10 inches), and not less than 1 inch deep, and perpendicular to the direction of runoff (i.e., parallel to the slope contours).
- Excessive roughness is undesirable where mowing is planned.

Roughening With Tracked Machinery:
- Limit roughening with tracked machinery to soils with a sandy textural component to avoid undue compaction of the soil surface.
- Operate tracked machinery up and down the slope to leave horizontal depressions in the soil. Do not back-blade during the final grading operation.
- Seed and mulch roughened areas as soon as possible to obtain optimum seed germination and growth.
Costs
Costs are based on the additional labor of tracking or preparation of the slope plus the cost of any required soil amendment materials.

Inspection and Maintenance
- BMPs must be inspected in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.

- Check the seeded slopes for signs of erosion such as rills and gullies. Fill these areas slightly above the original grade, then reseed and mulch as soon as possible.

- Inspect BMPs weekly during normal operations, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.

References

Non-Vegetative Stabilization

**Categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Erosion Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Sediment Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>Tracking Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE</td>
<td>Wind Erosion Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Non-Stormwater Management Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WM</td>
<td>Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**

☑️ Primary Category
☒ Secondary Category

**Description and Purpose**

Non-vegetative stabilization methods are used for temporary or permanent stabilization of areas prone to erosion and should be used only where vegetative options are not feasible; examples include:

- Areas of vehicular or pedestrian traffic such as roads or paths;
- Arid environments where vegetation would not provide timely ground coverage, or would require excessive irrigation;
- Rocky substrate, infertile or droughty soils where vegetation would be difficult to establish; and
- Areas where vegetation will not grow adequately within the construction time frame.

There are several non-vegetative stabilization methods and selection should be based on site-specific conditions.

*Decomposed Granite (DG)* is a permanent erosion protection method that consists of a layer of stabilized decomposed granite placed over an erodible surface.

*Degradable Mulches* of various types (see EC-3, EC-6, EC-8) can be used for temporary non-vegetative stabilization; examples include straw mulch, compost, wood chips or hydraulic muleh.

*Geotextiles and Mats* can be used for temporary non-vegetative stabilization (see EC-7). These BMPs are typically manufactured.
Non-Vegetative Stabilization

from degradable or synthetic materials and are designed and specified based on their functional longevity, i.e., how long they will persist and provide erosion protection. All geotextiles and mats should be replaced when they exceed their functional longevity or when permanent stabilization methods are instituted.

*Gravel Mulch* is a non-degradable erosion control product that is composed of washed and screened coarse to very coarse gravel, 16 mm to 64 mm (0.6" - 2.5"), similar to an AASHTO No. 3 coarse aggregate.

*Rock Slope Protection* consists of utilizing large rock or rip-rap (4" - 24") to stabilize slopes with a high erosion potential and those subject to scour along waterways.

*Soil Binders* can be used for temporary non-vegetative stabilization (see EC-5). The key to their use is functional longevity. In most cases, the soil binder will need to be routinely monitored and re-applied to maintain an erosion-resistant coverage.

**Suitable Applications**

Non-vegetated stabilization methods are suitable for use on disturbed soil areas and on material stockpiles that need to be temporarily or permanently protected from erosion by water and wind. Non-vegetated stabilization should only be utilized when vegetation cannot be established in the required timeframe, due to soil or climatic conditions, or where vegetation may be a potential fire hazard.

*Decomposed Granite (DG) and Gravel Mulch* are suitable for use in areas where vegetation establishment is difficult, on flat surfaces, trails and pathways, and when used in conjunction with a stabilizer or tackifier, on shallow slopes (i.e., 10:1 [H:V]). DG and gravel can also be used on shallow rocky slopes where vegetation cannot be established for permanent erosion control.

*Degradable Mulches* can be used to cover and protect soil surfaces from erosion both in temporary and permanent applications. In many cases, the use of mulches by themselves requires routine inspection and re-application. See EC-3 Hydraulic Mulch, EC-6 Straw Mulch, EC-8 Wood Mulch, or EC-14 Compost Blankets for more information.

*Geotextiles and Mats* can be used as a temporary stand-alone soil stabilization method. Depending on material selection, geotextiles and mats can be a short-term (3 mos - 1 year) or long-term (1-2 years) temporary stabilization method. For more information on geotextiles and mats see EC-7 Geotextiles and Mats.

*Rock Slope Protection* can be used when the slopes are subject to scour or have a high erosion potential, such as slopes adjacent to flowing waterways or slopes subject to overflow from detention facilities (spillways).

*Soil Binders* can be used for temporary stabilization of stockpiles and disturbed areas not subject to heavy traffic. See EC-5 Soil Binders for more information.
Non-Vegetative Stabilization

Limitations

**General**
- Refer to EC-3, EC-6, EC-8, and EC-14 for limitations on use of mulches. Refer to EC-7 for limitations on use of geotextiles and mats. Refer to EC-5 for limitations on use of Soil Binders.

**Decomposed Granite**
- Not available in some geographic regions.
- If not tackified, material may be susceptible to erosion even on slight slopes (e.g., 30:1 [H:V]).
- Installed costs may be more expensive than vegetative stabilization methods.

**Gravel Mulch**
- Availability is limited in some geographic regions.
- If not properly screened and washed, can contain fine material that can erode and/or create dust problems.
- If inadequately sized, material may be susceptible to erosion on sloped areas.
- Pore spaces fill with dirt and debris over time; may provide a growing medium for weeds.

**Rock Slope Protection**
- Installation is labor intensive.
- Installed costs can be significantly higher than vegetative stabilization methods.
- Rounded stones may not be used on slopes greater than 2:1 [H:V].

Implementation

**General**
Non-vegetated stabilization should be used in accordance with the following general guidance:
- Should be used in conjunction with other BMPs, including drainage, erosion controls and sediment controls.
- Refer to EC-3, EC-6, EC-8, and EC-14 for implementation details for mulches. Refer to EC-7 for implementation details for geotextiles and mats. Refer to EC-5 for implementation details for soil binders.
- Non-vegetated stabilization measures should be implemented as soon as the disturbance in the areas they are intended to protect has ceased.
- Additional guidance on the comparison and selection of temporary slope stabilization methods is provided in Appendix F of the Handbook.

**Decomposed Granite Stabilization**
- If used for a road or path should be installed on a prepared base.
Non-Vegetative Stabilization

- Should be mixed with a stabilizer if used for roads or pathways, or on slope applications.

- Though porous it is recommended to prevent standing water on or next to a decomposed granite road or pathway.

Gravel Mulch
- Should be sized based on slope, rainfall, and upgradient run-on conditions. Stone size should be increased as potential for erosion increases (steeper slopes, high intensity rainfall).

- If permanent, a weed control fabric should be placed prior to installation.

- Should be installed at a minimum 2” depth.

- Should completely cover all exposed surfaces.

Rock Slope Protection
- Rock slope protection installation should follow Caltrans Standard Specification 72-2: Rock Slope Protection. Refer to the specification for rock conformity requirements and installation methods.

- When using rock slope protection, rock size and installation method should be specified by an Engineer.

- A geotextile fabric should be placed prior to installation.

Costs
- Costs are highly variable depending not only on technique chosen, but also on materials chosen within specific techniques. In addition, availability of certain materials will vary by region/location, which will also affect the cost. Costs of mulches, geotextiles and mats, and soil binders are presented in their respective fact sheets. Costs for decomposed granite, gravel mulch stabilization and rock slope protection may be higher depending on location and availability of materials. Caltrans has provided an estimate for gravel mulch of $10 - $15/yd³ in flat areas and $11 - $23/yd³ on side slopes.

Inspection and Maintenance

General
- BMPs must be inspected in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.

- For permanent installation, require inspection periodically and after major storm events to look for signs of erosion or damage to the stabilization.

- All damage should be repaired immediately.

- Refer to EC-3, EC-6, EC-8, and EC-14 for inspection and maintenance requirements for mulches. Refer to EC-7 for inspection and maintenance requirements for geotextiles and mats. Refer to EC-5 for inspection and maintenance requirements for soil binders.
Decomposed Granite and Gravel Mulch Stabilization

- Rake out and add decomposed granite or gravel as needed to areas subject to rill erosion. Inspect upgradient drainage controls and repair/modify as necessary.

- Should remain stable under loose surface material. Any significant problem areas should be repaired to restore uniformity to the installation.

References


Gravel Mulch, Landscape Architecture Non-Standard Specification 10-2, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/roadside/detail-gm.htm

Maine Erosion and Sediment Control BMPs, DEPLW0588, Maine Department of Environmental Protection: Bureau of Land and Water Quality, 2003.

