

Sediment and Erosion Control

Guidelines for builders and developers



Why is sediment & erosion control important?

Soil erosion from construction sites causes major environmental problems for waterways and aquatic life.

Sediments washed into waterways impact heavily on aquatic flora and fauna and their habitat.

Sediments also block stormwater drains, cause waterways to silt up and increase the risk of flooding.

A single building site can lose truckloads of soil in one storm event

Benefits

- Improved compliance with environmental regulations and a greater understanding of the Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act 1997
- Improved wet weather working conditions, reduced downtime and earlier building completion
- Fewer public complaints and a better public image for your business
- Reduced stockpile losses and associated clean up costs
- A healthier and safer environment for the local community.

Legal responsibilities

- Developers and builders have a legal obligation to take all reasonable care to prevent soil erosion and sediment loss from construction sites. This also applies to other trades people such as excavators and earthmovers, landscapers, concreters, painters & delivery drivers
- Supervisors need to ensure that workers under their control (eg sub-contractors) do not breach environmental laws
- Under the POEO Act prosecution and on-the-spot fines of up to \$1500 apply to people who allow soil or other pollutants to enter stormwater drains or waterways, or place materials in a position where this is likely to occur.

Council's role

Councils have a responsibility to monitor the construction industry, provide educational information to industry and to enforce the environmental laws.



Best practice sediment and erosion controls

- Establish a single stabilised entry point (eg blue metallaggregate pad)
- Install geotextile sediment fence(s) along the low side of the site before work begins (see installation instructions below). Straw bales embedded into the ground can also reduce flow velocity, filter sediments and reduce erosion
- Divert water from upslope surrounding the building site with stabilised banks and channels. This is especially important on large steep sites
- Minimise the area to be disturbed and retain as much vegetation as possible to filter runoff from the site
- Stockpile soil, sand and other building materials behind the sediment control measures. Stockpile materials should not be placed on the footpath or road reserve
- Install appropriate waste receptacles onsite (eg mini-skips, bins and wind-proof litter receptors)
- Provide a wash down area behind sediment control measures for washing and cleaning activities, brick cutting, etc
- Connect downpipes from the guttering to the stormwater drain as soon as possible
- Fill in and compact trenches immediately after services have been laid
- Stabilise and revegetate disturbed areas as soon as possible. Turf strips are commonly used for this purpose, particularly along the kerbside

- Check sediment and erosion control measures regularly, especially before rain is expected and directly after a rain event
- Regularly sweep and collect material from the road and footpath. Don't hose these areas.

Which controls to use for my site

Each site is different and sediment and erosion control requirements need to be assessed on a site-by-site basis.

Council may grant development approval on condition that routine sediment and erosion control measures are implemented on site. Otherwise, a Sediment and Erosion Control Plan or Soil & Water Management Plan may be required with your Development Application (DA).

When to put controls in place

Control measures need to be installed on site before excavation or site disturbance begins.

Measures need to be maintained in good working order and repaired throughout the construction or development work (if required) until 70% revegetation cover has been established.

Further Information

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