

EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL REQUIREMENTS FOR AGRICULTURAL, PLOWING OR TILLING ACTIVITIES AND ANIMAL HEAVY USE AREAS

The processes used by farmers to produce the food and fiber needed by our nation involve disturbing the earth to varying degrees, depending on the type of tillage, planting techniques, animal management and cultivation. Under Chapter 102 - Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Management Regulations, persons involved with earth disturbance are required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) as part of an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (E&S Plan) to minimize erosion and soil loss. The implementation of BMPs is especially important since BMPs protect the soil resource and keep water clean.

A plan is required - Under Chapter 102, all agricultural plowing and tilling and animal heavy use areas are required to implement Agricultural BMPs. A written agricultural E&S Plan that meets the requirements found in Section 102.4(a) of the regulation is required for any plowing or tilling or animal heavy use areas that disturb 5,000 square feet or more. Agricultural BMPs, such as contour farming, contour strip-cropping, cover crops, grassed waterways, terraces, critical area planting, wastewater treatment strips, constructed wetlands, and diversions, as well as other common farming practices, must be included in the E&S Plan.

Help is available - Conservation districts were formed to help farmers plan, develop and implement conservation plans that include E&S Plan components for their farms. Technical assistance is also available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist in developing a conservation plan that will also meet the requirements of Chapter 102. In fact, some – but not all – NRCS conservation plans already meet the agricultural E&S requirements of Chapter 102. Assistance is also available from private agricultural consultants.

What is in the plan? An agricultural E&S Plan must identify cost-effective and reasonable BMPs to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sediment from agricultural plowing and tilling and animal heavy use areas. A schedule for implementation of the BMPs is also required. For agricultural plowing and tilling, BMPs must ensure that erosion rates do not exceed the soil loss tolerance, commonly called "T." Additional information about "T" and technical details of BMPs can be found in the ***Pennsylvania Soil and Water Conservation Technical Guide*** published by Pennsylvania NRCS and available on its Web site at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/> (click on Pennsylvania).

The agricultural E&S Plan must include a map that shows the location of features including surface waters, drainage patterns, field and property boundaries, buildings and farm structures, animal heavy use areas, roads and crossroads soils maps, tillage systems, schedules and crop rotations. The E&S Plan map and/or narrative also includes names, units and amounts, and locations of each of the BMPs installed or to be installed.

Is there ongoing responsibility? Continual management and maintenance of BMPs is essential for proper functioning. Structural practices are designed for a specific storm frequency and may suffer damage when larger storms occur. Structural practices that require earth disturbance and stabilization should be frequently checked to assure that vegetation and other types of stabilization are adequate to protect the structure and to assure that it will continue to function properly.

Other BMPs, such as strip-cropping, contour farming and grass buffers, require annual attention to assure that the boundaries are maintained and adequate vegetation is maintained. Practices that are performed annually, such as cover crops, conservation tillage, crop residue management and crop rotations, must be carried out according to the agricultural E&S Plan. These practices require detailed attention to assure that they are carried out at the times and to the extent specified. Residue

management and BMPs for animal heavy use areas are two specific examples that require this annual attention.

What happens to the plan and when does it change? The agricultural E&S Plan must be available at the farm at all times to guide the person(s) responsible for overall farm operations. If changes occur in tillage operations or animal heavy use areas, the agricultural E&S Plan must then be updated.

For additional information and assistance, contact your county conservation district (its phone number can be found in your local telephone book) or the Department of Environmental Protection's regional office, Permitting and Technical Services Section listed below.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	COUNTY RESPONSIBILITY	WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	COUNTY RESPONSIBILITY
Northcentral Regional Office 208 W. Third St., Suite 101 Williamsport, PA 17701 570-327-3574	Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga and Union	Southcentral Regional Office 909 Elmerton Ave. Harrisburg, PA 17110 717-705-4700	Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry and York
Northeast Regional Office 2 Public Square Wilkes-Barre, PA 15701-1915 570-826-2511	Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming	Southeast Regional Office 2 East Main Street Norrstown, PA 19401 484-250-5970	Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia
Northwest Regional Office 230 Chestnut St. Meadville, PA 16335 814-332-6984	Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango and Warren	Southwest Regional Office 400 Waterfront Dr. Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4745 412-442-4000	Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland

DEP CENTRAL OFFICE

Bureau of Watershed Management
Division of Conservation Districts and Nutrient Management
P.O. Box 8465
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8465
717-787-7577
Fax 717-787-9549

For more information, visit www.depweb.state.pa.us, keyword: Erosion Control.