

## Description

Areas within an industrial site that are bare of vegetation or are subject to activities that promote the suppression of vegetation are often subject to erosion. In addition, they may or may not be contaminated from past or current activities. If the area is temporarily bare because of construction, see SC-42, Building Repair, Remodeling, and Construction. Sites with excessive erosion or the potential for excessive erosion should consider employing the soil erosion BMPs identified in the Construction BMP Handbook. Note that this fact sheet addresses soils that are not so contaminated as to exceed hazardous waste criteria (see Title 22 California Code of Regulations for Hazardous Waste Criteria).

## Approach

Reduce potential for pollutant discharge through source control pollution prevention and BMP implementation. Successful implementation depends on effective training of employees on applicable BMPs and general pollution prevention strategies and objectives.

## Pollution Prevention

Preserve natural vegetation whenever possible. See also EC-2, Preservation of Existing Vegetation, in the Construction BMP Handbook.

## Suggested Protocols

- Preserve natural vegetation.
- Analyze soil conditions.
- Re-vegetate when necessary.
- Remove contaminated soil.
- Utilize chemical stabilization when needed. See also EC-5, Soil Binders, and EC-13, Polyacrylamide, in the Construction BMP Handbook.
- Use geosynthetic membranes to control erosion if feasible. See also EC-7, Geotextiles and Mats, in the Construction BMP Handbook.

## Training

Training is not a significant element of this best management practice.

## Objectives

- Cover
- Contain
- Educate
- Reduce/Minimize
- Product Substitution

## Targeted Constituents

Sediment	✓
Nutrients	✓
Trash	
Metals	✓
Bacteria	✓
Oil and Grease	✓
Organics	✓



# SC-40 Contaminated or Erodible Areas

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## *Other Considerations*

- Disadvantages of preserving natural vegetation or revegetation include:
  - Requires substantial planning to preserve and maintain the existing vegetation
  - May not be cost-effective with high land costs
  - Lack of rainfall, inadequate irrigation and/or poor soils may limit the success of re-vegetated areas
- Disadvantages of chemical stabilization include:
  - Creation of impervious surfaces
  - May cause harmful effects on water quality
  - Is usually more expensive than vegetative cover

## **Requirements**

### *Costs*

Except for preservation of natural vegetation, each of the above solutions can be quite expensive depending upon the size of the area.

### *Maintenance*

Maintenance should be minimal, except possibly if irrigation of vegetation is necessary.

## **Supplemental Information**

### *Preserving Vegetation to Minimize Erosion*

Preserving stabilized areas minimizes erosion potential, protects water quality, and provides aesthetic benefits. The most effective way to control erosion is to preserve existing vegetation. Preservation of natural vegetation provides a natural buffer zone and an opportunity for infiltration of stormwater and capture of pollutants in the soil matrix. This practice can be used as a permanent source control measure.

Vegetation preservation should be incorporated into the site. Preservation requires good site management to minimize the impact of construction when construction is underway and exposure of soils after construction. Proper maintenance is important to ensure healthy vegetation that can control erosion. Different species, soil types, and climatic conditions will require different maintenance activities such as mulching, fertilizing, liming, irrigation, pruning and weed and pest control. Maintenance should be performed regularly especially during construction phases.

The preferred approach is to leave as much native vegetation on-site as possible, thereby reducing or eliminating any erosion problem. However, assuming the site already has contaminated or erodible surface areas, there are four possible courses of action which can be taken:

- The area can be revegetated if it is not in use and therefore not subject to damage from site activities. In as much as the area is already devoid of vegetation, special measures are likely

necessary. Lack of vegetation may be due to the lack of water and/or poor soils. The latter can perhaps be solved with fertilization, or the ground may simply be too compacted from prior use. Improving soil conditions may be sufficient to support the recovery of vegetation. Use process wastewater for irrigation if possible. Finally, see the Construction BMP Handbook for further procedures on establishing vegetation.

- Chemical stabilization can be used as an alternate method in areas where temporary seeding practices cannot be used because of season or climate. It can provide immediate, effective, and inexpensive erosion control. Application rates and procedures recommended by the manufacturer should be followed as closely as possible to prevent the products from forming ponds and creating large areas where moisture cannot penetrate the soil. See also EC-5, Soil Binders, and EC-13, Polyacrylamide, in the Construction BMP Handbook for more information. Advantages of chemical stabilization include:
  - Applied easily to the surface
  - Stabilizes areas effectively
  - Provides immediate protection to soils that are in danger of erosion
- Contaminated soils can be removed, however this is a last resort and quite expensive. The level and extent of the contamination must be determined. This determination and removal must comply with State and Federal regulations, permits must be acquired and fees paid.
- Geosynthetics may be used. Geosynthetics include those materials that are designed as an impermeable barrier to contain or control large amounts of liquid or solid matter. Geosynthetics have been developed primarily for use in landfills and surface impoundments, and the technology is well established. There are two general types of geosynthetics: geomembranes (impermeable) and geotextiles (permeable). Geomembranes are composed of one of three types of impermeable materials: elastomers (rubbers), thermoplastics (plastics), or a combination of these two types of materials. See also EC-7, Geotextiles and Mats, in the Construction BMP Handbook for more information. The advantages of these materials include:
  - A variety of compounds are available
  - Sheeting is produced in a factory environment
  - Polymeric membranes are flexible
  - Installation is simpleDisadvantages include:
  - Chemical resistance must be determined for each application
  - Seaming systems may be a weak link in the system
  - Many materials are subject to attack from biotic, mechanical, or environmental sources

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Geotextiles are uncoated synthetic textile products that are not watertight. They are composed of a variety of materials, most commonly polypropylene and polyester. Geotextiles serve five basic functions:

- Filtration
- Drainage
- Separation
- Reinforcement
- Armoring

## References and Resources

California's Nonpoint Source Program Plan <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/index.html>

Clark County Storm Water Pollution Control Manual  
<http://www.co.clark.wa.us/pubworks/bmpman.pdf>

King County Storm Water Pollution Control Manual <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/dss/spcm.htm>

Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program <http://www.scvurppp.org>

The Storm Water Managers Resource Center <http://www.stormwatercenter.net/>