

## Description and Purpose

Matting of natural materials 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, matting may be used to stabilize soils until vegetation is established.

## Suitable Applications

Matting is commonly applied on short, steep slopes where erosion hazard is high and vegetation will be slow to establish. Matting is also used on stream banks where moving water at velocities between 3 ft/s and 6 ft/s are likely to wash out new vegetation, and in areas where the soil surface is disturbed and where existing vegetation has been removed. Matting may also be used when seeding cannot occur (e.g., late season construction and/or the arrival of an early rain season). Erosion control matting should be considered when the soils are fine grained and potentially erosive. These measures 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
- Channels with flows exceeding 3.3 ft/s

## Objectives

EC	Erosion Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SE	Sediment Control	
TR	Tracking Control	
WE	Wind Erosion Control	3
NS	Non-Stormwater Management Control	
WM	Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control	

## Legend:

- ☒ Primary Objective
- ☒ Secondary Objective

## Targeted Constituents

Sediment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nutrients	
Trash	
Metals	
Bacteria	
Oil and Grease	
Organics	

## Potential Alternatives

- EC-3 Hydraulic Mulch
- EC-4 Hydroseeding
- EC-5 Soil Binders
- EC-6 Straw Mulch
- EC-8 Wood Mulching



- Channels to be vegetated
- Stockpiles
- Slopes adjacent to water bodies of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)

**Limitations**

- Properly installed mattings provide excellent erosion control but do so at relatively high cost. This high cost typically limits the use of mattings to areas of concentrated channel flow and steep slopes.
- Mattings are more costly than other BMP practices, limiting their use to areas where other BMPs are ineffective (e.g. channels, steep slopes).
- Installation is critical and requires experienced contractors. The contractor should install the matting material in such a manner that continuous contact between the material and the soil occurs.
- Geotextiles and Mats may delay seed germination, due to reduction in soil temperature.
- Blankets and mats 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).
- Blankets and mats must be removed and disposed of prior to application of permanent soil stabilization measures.
- Plastic sheeting is easily vandalized, easily torn, photodegradable, and must be disposed of at a landfill.
- Plastic results in 100% runoff, which may cause serious erosion problems in the areas receiving the increased flow.
- 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 alternative measures, such as seeding and mulching, may be installed.
- Geotextiles, mats, plastic covers, and erosion control covers have maximum flow rate limitations; consult the manufacturer for proper selection.
- Not suitable for areas that have heavy foot traffic (tripping hazard) – e.g., pad areas around buildings under construction.

**Implementation*****Material Selection***

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

The following natural and synthetic mattings are commonly used:

## ***Geotextiles***

- Material should be a 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  $0.07 \text{ sec}^{-1}$  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***

- Plastic sheeting should have a minimum thickness of 6 mils, and must be keyed in at the top of slope 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.
- 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 rolled erosion control products (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.
  - **Jute** is a natural fiber that is made into a yarn that is loosely woven into a biodegradable mesh. It is designed to be used in conjunction with vegetation and has longevity of approximately one year. 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  $0.8 \text{ lb/yd}^2$ ,  $\pm 10$  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/yd<sup>2</sup>. 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/yd<sup>2</sup>. 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.
- **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/yd<sup>2</sup>. 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 1/4 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, which must be secured with U-shaped staples or stakes in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.

## ***Site Preparation***

- Proper site preparation is essential to ensure complete contact of the blanket or matting with the soil.
- 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***

Seed the area before blanket installation for erosion control and revegetation. Seeding after mat installation is often specified for turf reinforcement application. When seeding prior to blanket

installation, all check slots and other areas disturbed during installation must be re-seeded. Where soil filling is specified, 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. When using jute matting on a seeded area, apply approximately half the seed before laying the mat and the remainder after laying the mat. 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 are made of glass fiber strips, excelsior matting strips or tight folded jute matting blanket or strips for use on steep, highly erodible watercourses. The check slots are placed in narrow trenches 6 to 12 in. deep across the channel and left flush with the soil surface. They are to cover the full cross section of designed flow.

### ***Laying and Securing Matting***

- Before laying the matting, all check slots should be installed and the friable seedbed 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.

### ***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 tamp 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.

- 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/yd<sup>2</sup>. Moderate slopes, 2:1 (H:V) to 3:1 (H:V), require a minimum of 1 1/2 staples/yd<sup>2</sup>.

## ***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.
- 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)***

- 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**

Relatively high compared to other BMPs. Biodegradable materials: \$0.50 - \$0.57/yd<sup>2</sup>. Permanent materials: \$3.00 - \$4.50/yd<sup>2</sup>. Staples: \$0.04 - \$0.05/staple. Approximate costs for installed materials are shown below:

Rolled Erosion Control Products		Installed Cost per Acre
Biodegradable	Jute Mesh	\$6,500
	Curled Wood Fiber	\$10,500
	Straw	\$8,900
	Wood Fiber	\$8,900
	Coconut Fiber	\$13,000
	Coconut Fiber Mesh	\$31,200
	Straw Coconut Fiber	\$10,900
Non-Biodegradable	Plastic Netting	\$2,000
	Plastic Mesh	\$3,200
	Synthetic Fiber with Netting	\$34,800
	Bonded Synthetic Fibers	\$50,000
	Combination with Biodegradable	\$32,000

Source: Caltrans Guidance for Soil Stabilization for Temporary Slopes, Nov. 1999

## ***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, and at two-week intervals during the non-rainy season.
- Inspect BMPs subject to non-stormwater discharges daily while non-stormwater discharges occur.



- 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.
- 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.
- Check that disturbed areas are seeded.

## References

Guides for Erosion and Sediment Controls in California, USDA Soils Conservation Service, January 1991.

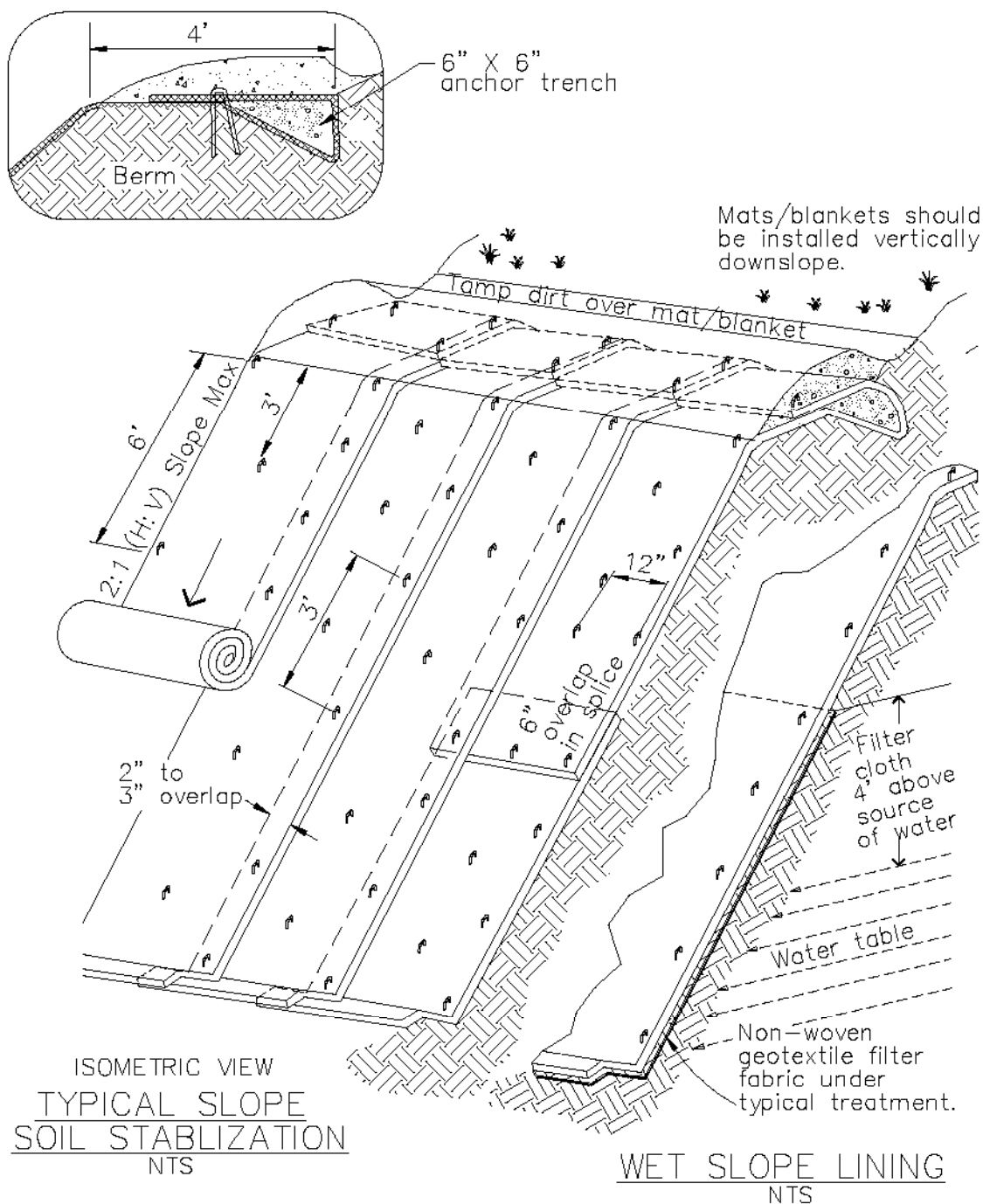
National Management Measures to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution from Urban Areas, United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2002.

Stormwater Quality Handbooks Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMPs) Manual, State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), November 2000.

Guidance Document: Soil Stabilization for Temporary Slopes, State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), November 1999

Stormwater Management of the Puget Sound Basin, Technical Manual, Publication #91-75, Washington State Department of Ecology, February 1992.

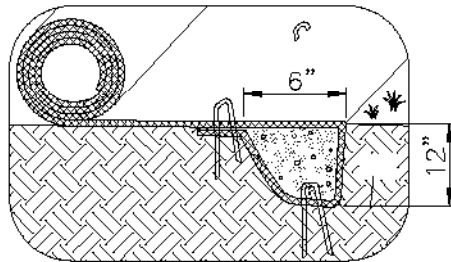
Water Quality Management Plan for The Lake Tahoe Region, Volume II, Handbook of Management Practices, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, November 1988.



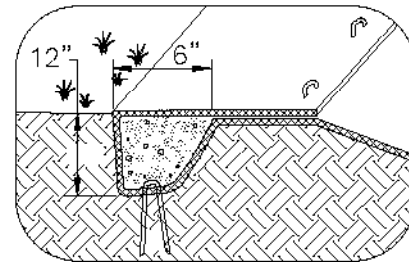
## NOTES:

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

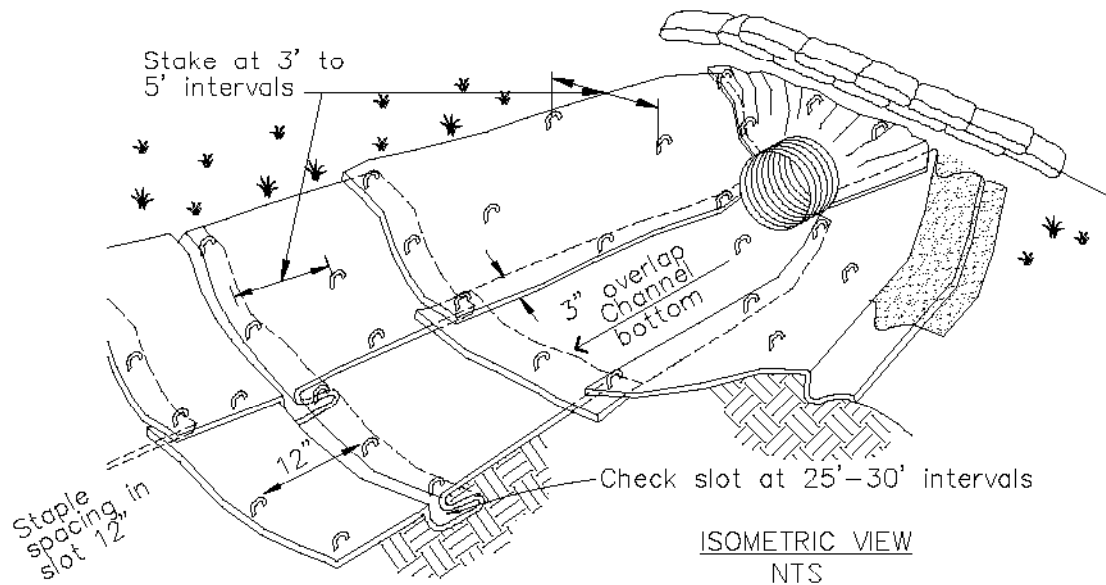
## TYPICAL INSTALLATION DETAIL



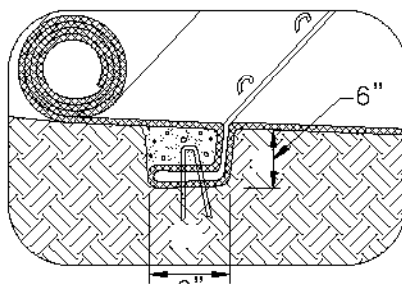
INITIAL CHANNEL ANCHOR TRENCH  
NTS



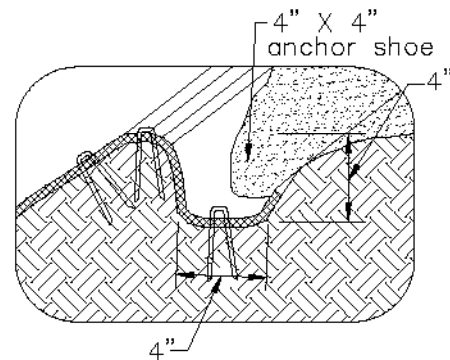
TERMINAL SLOPE AND CHANNEL  
ANCHOR TRENCH  
NTS



ISOMETRIC VIEW  
NTS



INTERMITTENT CHECK SLOT  
NTS



LONGITUDINAL ANCHOR TRENCH  
NTS

## NOTES:

1. Check slots to be constructed per manufacturers specifications.
2. Staking or stapling layout per manufacturers specifications.
3. Install per manufacturer's recommendations

## TYPICAL INSTALLATION DETAIL