



Natural Resources Conservation Service

CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

SPOIL DISPOSAL

CODE 572

(cf)

DEFINITION

Disposal of surplus excavated materials from construction activities.

PURPOSE

This practice is used to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

- Minimize soil erosion
- Minimize water quality degradation
- Minimize ponding

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies where spoil material from construction activities causes a resource concern or its placement is not compatible with the land use or landscape.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Plan and design spoil disposal to comply with all Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. The landowner must obtain all necessary permissions from regulatory agencies, or document that no permits are required.

Place spoil on slopes that are stable for the type of material and compatible with the land use. Place spoil in relatively uniform layers, to prevent ponding and facilitate drainage away from the spoil area. Place spoil so it does not impede existing drainage features.

Do not spread spoil when the ground or spoil is frozen or excessively wet unless site-specific design considerations indicate frozen or wet conditions will not have adverse effects.

Establish vegetation on spoil areas if the area will not be cropped. If spoil disposal is completed at a time of year that is not conducive to the establishment of the desired plant species or cropping is delayed, utilize temporary erosion control measures immediately and maintain the measures until the site can be successfully vegetated or crops planted. Vegetate an uncropped site by referencing establishment criteria from appropriate conservation practice standards.

Before placing spoil material that has physical or chemical characteristics that prevent the establishment of adequate vegetation, strip topsoil from the spoil disposal area. Use the topsoil or other suitable soil material to cover the spoil with a minimum of 6 inches of soil prior to seeding operations.

If spoils are suspected of being contaminated with hazardous substances or petroleum products, contact other specialists trained and experienced in evaluating the level of contamination before proceeding with

surveying, planning or design work. Determine the appropriate remediation if hazardous materials are present. Do not proceed with treatment or disposal if treatment of the contaminated material is outside the normal area of expertise, exposes field employees to hazardous conditions, or exposes the agency to uncontrolled liability. If hazardous material is discovered during disposal, suspend work until the nature of the waste can be determined. (See NRCS National Engineering Manual (Title 210), Part 503, Subpart E, "Prohibited Technical Assistance.")

CONSIDERATIONS

Spoil areas need not have the appearance of waste areas. Blend spoil areas in a manner compatible with the landscape and land use. Plan the location, slopes, and vegetation to benefit the planned land use.

Improve landscape quality through the creative placement of spoil material. Use spoil material to block undesirable views; deflect or redirect wind or snow; or block noise. Study the potential to haul and donate spoil for construction sites where fill is required.

Spoil areas with permanent vegetation can provide wildlife habitat. When choosing vegetation for the land use, select native species that will provide food and cover for wildlife.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Prepare plans and specifications for spoil disposal that describe the requirements for applying the practice. At a minimum, include—

- A plan view showing the limits of the spoil disposal, location of approved access route from the construction site to the disposal site, and location of utilities.
- Lift thickness for spoil placement and compactive effort.
- Maximum and/or minimum slopes for spoil areas.
- Typical cross sections of spoil areas.
- Maximum and/or minimum height of spoil above existing ground surface.
- Temporary erosion control measures.
- Seed mix, lime, fertilizer, and mulch type, and application rates.
- Estimate of quantities.
- Construction specifications.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Prepare a written operation and maintenance plan for the operator. The minimum requirements include—

- Inspect the spoil area periodically and after large rainfall events.
- Fill or repair any excessive rills or gullies in the spoil and revegetate if in non-crop field. Replace topsoil when needed.

REFERENCES

USDA NRCS. 2017. National Engineering Manual (Title 210), Part 503, Subpart E, Prohibited Technical Assistance. Washington, D.C. <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/>.