

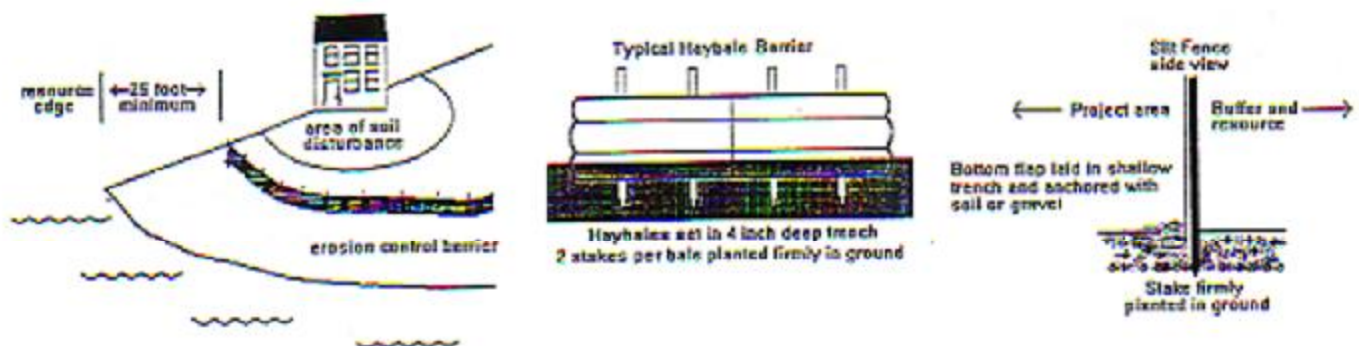


Erosion Control for Homeowners

Before Construction

1. If you have hired a contractor, make sure you have discussed your permit-by-rule with them. Talk about what measures they plan to take to control erosion. Everybody involved should understand what the resource is and where it is located. Most people could identify the edge of a lake or a river. The edges of wetlands, however, are often not obvious. Your contractor may be the person actually pushing dirt around but you are both responsible for complying with the permit-by-rule.
2. Call around and find sources for your erosion controls. You will probably need silt fence, hay bales and grass seed or conservation mix. Some good places to check are feed stores, hardware stores, landscapers and contractor supply houses. It is not always easy to find hay or straw during late winter and early spring. It may also be more expensive during those times of year. Plan ahead. Purchase a supply early and keep it under a tarp.
3. Before any soil is disturbed, make sure an erosion control barrier has been installed. The barrier can be either a silt fence, a row of staked hay bales, or both. Use the drawings below as a guide for correct installation and placement. The barrier should be placed as close as possible to the activity.

If a contractor is installing the barrier, double check it as a precaution. Erosion control barriers should be installed "on the contour", meaning at the same level along the land slope, whenever possible. This keeps stormwater from flowing to the lowest point of the barrier where it builds up and overflows or destroys it.



During Construction

1. Use lots of hay or straw mulch on disturbed soil. The idea behind mulch is to prevent rain from striking the soil directly. It is the force of raindrops striking the soil that causes a lot of erosion. More than 90% of erosion is prevented by keeping the soil covered.
2. Inspect your erosion control barriers frequently. This is especially important after a rainfall. If there is muddy water leaving the project site, then your erosion controls are not working as intended. In that situation, stop work and figure out what can be done to prevent more soil from getting past the barrier.

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After Construction

1. After the project is complete, replant the area. All ground covers are not equal. For instance, a mix of creeping red fescue and Kentucky bluegrass is a good choice for lawns and other high maintenance areas. The same mix would not be a good choice for stabilizing a road shoulder or a cut bank that you don't intend to mow.
2. If you finish your project after September 15, then do not spread grass seed. There is a very good chance that the seed will germinate and be killed by a frost before it has a chance to become established. Instead, mulch the site with a thick layer of hay or straw. In the spring, rake off the mulch and seed the area. Don't forget to mulch again to hold in moisture and prevent the seed from washing away.
3. Keep your erosion control barrier up and maintained until the area is permanently stabilized.

Why Control Erosion?

*Protect Water Quality

When soil erodes into protected resources such as streams, rivers, wetlands and lakes it has many effects. Eroding soil particles carry phosphorus to the water. An excess of phosphorus can lead to explosions of algae growth called blooms. In addition, when the soil settles out on the bottom it smothers fish eggs and small animals eaten by fish. There are lots of other impacts as well, all bad.

*Protect Soil

It has taken thousands of years for our soil to develop. We cannot afford to waste this valuable resource.

*Save Money

Replacing topsoil or gravel washed off your property is expensive. You end up paying twice because State and local agencies spend your tax dollars digging out ditches and storm drains choked with sediment.