

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

LAND SMOOTHING

(Acre)

CODE 466

DEFINITION

Removing irregularities on the land surface.

PURPOSE

To improve surface drainage, provide for more uniform cultivation, and improve equipment operation and efficiency.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on areas where depressions, mounds, old terraces, turn rows, and other surface irregularities interfere with the application of needed soil and water conservation and management practices.

It is limited to areas having adequate soil depth or where topsoil can be salvaged and replaced.

This practice does not apply to the regular maintenance on irrigated land or on land that has been modified using Conservation Practice Standards 462, Precision Land Forming, or 464, Irrigation Land Leveling.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

The extent of rough grading required and tolerances of the finished smoothing job shall be in keeping with the requirements of the planned cropping system.

Construction operations shall be carried out in such a manner that erosion and air and water pollution are minimized.

Irregularities shall be smoothed to the degree required for the planned use.

The land to be smoothed shall be cleared of vegetative matter and trash.

CONSIDERATIONS

Items to consider include the following:

- The ground surface should be plowed or disked prior to smoothing.
- Effects on the water budget--especially on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, and evaporation
- Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment and soluble substances attached to sediment carried by runoff
- Effects on downstream water quality
- Potential for earth moving to uncover or redistribute toxic materials such as saline soils
- Effects on wetland hydrology and/or wetland wildlife habitat
- Effects on soil loss due to increased wind erosion potential and subsequent deposition

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for land smoothing shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirement for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Actions shall be carried out to ensure that this practice functions as intended. An operation and maintenance plan shall be developed and reviewed with the landowner or individual responsible for operation and maintenance. The plan shall include performing maintenance when needed to ensure that the surfaces are maintained at the degree of smoothness required to function as intended.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service or download it from the electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG).

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