

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

STREAM CROSSING

(No.)

CODE 578

DEFINITION

A stabilized area or structure constructed across a stream to provide a travel way for people, livestock, equipment, or vehicles.

PURPOSE

- Improve water quality by reducing sediment, nutrient, organic, and inorganic loading of the stream.
- Reduce streambank and streambed erosion.
- Provide crossing for access to another land unit.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies to all land uses where an intermittent or perennial watercourse exists and a ford crossing is desired for livestock, people, and /or equipment. [Stream bed in the channel reach containing the crossing must be vertically stable.](#)

CRITERIA

[Crossings shall be planned, designed, and constructed to comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.](#)

Location. Stream crossings shall be located in areas where the streambed is stable or where grade control can be provided to create a stable condition. [Crossing shall be located in straight channel sections beyond the influence of any curved sections.](#) Avoid sites where channel grade or alignment changes abruptly, excessive seepage or instability is evident, overfalls exist, or large tributaries

enter the stream. Wetland areas shall be avoided if at all possible.

Locate crossings, where possible, out of shady riparian areas to discourage cattle loafing time in the stream.

Stream crossings shall provide a way for normal passage of water, fish and other aquatic animals within the channel during all seasons of the year.

Access Roads. Where high rates of erosion of the adjacent roadways that slope towards the crossing threaten to deliver an excessive amount of sediment to the drainage, install measures to minimize erosion of the roadside ditch, road surface, and/or cut slopes. Where the stream crossing is installed as part of a roadway, the crossing shall be in accordance with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, 560, Access Road.

Width. The stream crossing shall provide an adequate travel-way width for the intended use. A multi-use stream crossing shall have a travel-way no less than 10 feet wide. "Livestock only" crossings shall be no less than 6 feet wide. Width shall be measured from the upstream end to the downstream end of the stream crossing and shall not include the side slopes.

Side Slopes. All cuts and fills for the stream crossing shall have side slopes that are stable for the soil involved. Side slopes of earth cuts or fills shall be no steeper than 2 horizontal to 1 vertical. Rock cuts or fills shall be no steeper than 1.5 horizontal to 1 vertical.

Stream Approaches. Approaches to the stream crossing shall blend with existing site conditions where possible, and shall not be steeper than 4 horizontal to 1 vertical [when](#)

used for livestock crossing and 6:1 when used for vehicle crossing. Unless the foundation geology is otherwise acceptable, the approaches shall be stable, have a gradual ascent or descent grade, and be underlain with suitable material, as necessary, to withstand repeated and long term use. The minimum width of the approaches shall be equal to the width of the crossing surface.

Surface runoff shall be diverted around the approaches to prevent erosion of the approaches. Roadside ditches shall be directed into a diversion or away from the crossing surface. **Approaches shall be protected to the top of the bank or to the extent of the constructed grade, whichever is greater.**

Rock. All rock shall be chosen to withstand exposure to air, water, freezing and thawing. When rock is used, it shall be sufficiently large and dense so that it is not mobilized by design flood flows.

Fencing. Areas adjacent to the stream crossing shall be permanently fenced or otherwise excluded as needed to manage livestock access to the crossing.

Cross-stream fencing at fords shall be accomplished with breakaway wire, swinging floodgates, hanging electrified chain or other devices to allow the passage of floodwater debris during high flows.

All fencing shall be designed and constructed in accordance with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 382, Fence.

Vegetation. All areas to be vegetated shall be planted as soon as practical after construction. When necessary, use of NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 342, Critical Area Planting shall be considered where vegetation is unlikely to become established by natural regeneration, or acceleration of the recovery of vegetation is desired.

Criteria for Ford Crossings

When ford crossings are used, the cross-sectional area of the crossing shall not be less than the natural channel cross-sectional area. A portion of the crossing shall be depressed at or below the average stream bottom elevation when needed to keep base flows or low flows concentrated.

Cutoff walls shall be provided at the upstream and downstream edges of ford-type stream crossings when needed to protect against undercutting. **Minimum depth of cutoff wall shall be 2 feet below stream bed grade and shall be keyed into each bank for a minimum distance of 3 feet.**

The finished top surface of the ford type stream crossing in the bottom of the watercourse shall be no higher than the original stream bottom at the upstream edge of the ford crossing. If the downstream edge of the ford crossing is above the original stream bottom, the ford crossing shall be stabilized in accordance with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 584, Stream Channel Stabilization.

Where rock is used for-ford type stream crossings for livestock, use a hoof contact zone or alternative surfacing method over the surfacing rock. **The minimum rock size for the zone shall be 1.5 inches so as not to encourage standing of livestock in the crossing for long periods of time.**

Concrete Fords

Concrete ford crossings shall be used only where the foundation of the stream crossing is determined to have adequate bearing strength.

Concrete shall have a minimum compressive strength of 3,500 psi at 28 days. Concrete ford crossings shall have a minimum thickness of placed concrete of 5 inches with minimum reinforcement of 6-inch by 6-inch, 6 gauge welded wire fabric. The concrete slab shall be poured on a minimum 4-inch thick rock base, unless the foundation is otherwise acceptable.

Precast concrete panels may be used in lieu of cast-in-place concrete slabs. Precast concrete units shall comply with ACI 525 or 533, or as otherwise acceptable for local conditions.

When heavy equipment loads are anticipated, the concrete slab shall be designed using an appropriate procedure as described in American Concrete Institute, ACI 360, Design of Slabs on Grade.

Geocell and/or Rock Ford Crossings

Rock ford crossings with geotextile shall be used when the site has a soft or unstable subgrade. Ford crossings made of stabilizing material such as rock riprap are often used in steep areas subject to flash flooding, where normal flow is shallow or intermittent.

The bed of the channel shall be excavated to the necessary depth and width and covered with geotextile material. The geotextile material shall be installed on the excavated surface of the ford and shall extend across the bottom of the stream and at least up to **the high bank elevation of the stream.**

Geotextiles shall be used where appropriate as a separator between rock and soil to support the rock material and/or prevent migration of soil particles from the subgrade, through the lining material. Geotextile shall be a non-woven needle punched fabric conforming to Missouri Construction Specification 753 if it is to act as a filter between the soil and rock. A Woven geotextile may be used if it is only acting as support for the rock.

The geotextile materials, **including geocells**, shall be covered **or filled** with at least 6 inches of crushed rock. All geosynthetic material shall be suitably durable and shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

At a minimum, all **geocells and/or** rock ford stream crossings shall be designed to remain stable during the 10-year, 24-hour peak discharge.

CONSIDERATIONS

Avoid or minimize stream crossings, when possible, through evaluation of alternative trail or travel-way locations.

** (Blue/light font indicates change from previous standard.)*

Ford crossings have the least detrimental impact on water quality when crossing is infrequent. Ford crossings are adapted for crossing wide, shallow watercourses with firm streambeds.

Stream crossings should be located where adverse environmental impacts will be minimized and considering the following:

- Effects on up-stream and down-stream flow conditions that could result in increases in erosion, deposition, or flooding.
- Short term and construction-related effects on water quality.
- Effects on fish passage and wildlife habitats.
- Effects on cultural resources.
- Overall effect on erosion and sedimentation that will be caused by the installation of the crossing and any necessary stream diversion.

Where stream crossings are used, evaluate the need for safety measures such as water depth signage at ford crossings.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for stream crossings shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An operation and maintenance plan shall be developed and implemented for the life of the practice.

The stream crossing, appurtenances, and associated fence should be inspected after each major storm event, with repairs made as needed.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

FOR

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General

Operation and maintenance shall address maintaining the lined portions, associated berms approaches. Site should be checked every six months and after any excessive rainfall.

Any component at the site should be corrected as soon as possible to prevent major damages.

Stream Crossing Approaches

Eroded areas shall be promptly repaired and reseeded, if applicable.

Diversion berms if installed shall be maintained at the design height shown on the as-built drawings.

Type of lining

Concrete

Check for any cracking in concrete surface and determine to what depth the cracking is occurring.

Look for any exposed steel reinforcement, if applicable. If present and exposed, prepare a neat cement mixture composed of cement, sand, and water. Prepare area to be patched by chipping back to solid material, wetting the area by placing wet burlap or other moisture

holding materials on the area for at least one hour prior to start of patching.

Observe the condition of any contraction joints. Consult with local office staff on ways to repair effected area.

Rock Riprap

Compare size of existing rock pieces to size of those at time of installation. (Refer to as-built drawings and specifications.) If substantially smaller in size, consider replacing rock riprap with proper size in order for crossing to operate as designed.

Check for overall appearance of cross sectional area. Redistribute rock pieces to reestablish proper cross sectional shape and dimensions. Add additional rock riprap as needed to maintain the designed cross-section.

Geocell

Check for eroded areas within the cell matrix and repair by filling with the proper sized rock (Refer to as-built drawings and specifications).

Vegetation

The vegetation shall be maintained to prevent erosion or gulying of the associated berm and other areas near the stream crossing site.

Additional details: _____

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**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
MISSOURI CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATION**

FOR

STREAM CROSSING

ROCK RIPRAP LINED

CODE 578

General

Work shall consist of furnishing all labor, equipment and materials, to construct the rock lined stream crossing and appurtenances at locations shown on the drawings. Construction operations shall be carried out in a manner and sequence that erosion and air and water pollution are minimized and held within legal limits.

The completed job shall present a workmanlike appearance and shall conform to the line, grades, and elevations shown on the drawings or as staked in the field.

All operations shall be carried out in a safe and skillful manner. Safety and health regulations shall be observed and appropriate safety measures used. Contractor shall be assured that all state laws concerning buried utilities have been met.

A land disturbance permit from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources may be needed if the disturbed area is greater than one (1) acre in size.

Project may require a federal permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Office for information.

Materials

Individual rock fragments shall be dense, sound, and free from defects conducive to accelerated weathering. Sandstone and siltstone shall not be used. Rock fragments shall be angular to subrounded in shape. The rock should have the following properties:

- a. Bulk specific gravity (saturated surface-dry basis) not less than 2.5 .
- b. Absorption not more than 2 percent.
- c. Soundness: Weight loss in 5 cycles not more than 20 percent when sodium sulphate is used or 25 percent when magnesium sulfate is used.

The rock shall conform to the specified grading limits. Flat slabs of concrete or rock shall not be used.

Subgrade preparation

Foundation area shall be cleared of trees, stumps, roots, and sod. Cross section area shall be excavated to the neat lines and grades as shown on the drawings. Over excavated areas shall be backfilled with moist soil compacted to the density of the surrounding material.

Equipment-placed rock riprap

Rock shall be placed by equipment on the surfaces and to the depths specified. Riprap shall be placed to the full course thickness in one operation and in such a manner as to avoid serious displacement of the underlying materials.

Riprap in place shall be reasonably homogeneous with larger rocks uniformly distributed and firmly in contact one to another with the smaller rocks and spoils filling the voids between the larger rocks. Riprap shall be placed so it does not reduce the channel cross sectional area. It is recommended that rock placement begin at

the channel bottom section and progress towards each bank.

Filter or bedding layer

When the drawings specify filter layers or bedding beneath riprap, the filter or bedding material shall be spread uniformly on the prepared subgrade surfaces to the depth specified. The surface of such layers shall be

finished reasonably free of mounds, dips, or windrows. The filter or bedding materials shall be hard, durable material conforming to the grading limits shown on the drawings or in the specifications.

Geotextile conforming to Missouri Construction Specification 753 Geotextile may be used when shown on the drawings.

Additional details: _____

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
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STREAM CROSSING

CONCRETE LINED

CODE 578

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All operations shall be carried out in a safe and skillful manner. Safety and health regulations shall be observed and appropriate safety measures used. Contractor shall be assured that all state laws concerning buried utilities have been met.

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Materials

Materials and fabrication shall be as specified herein or on the drawings.

Concrete and reinforcement steel shall conform to Missouri Construction Specification 750, Reinforced Concrete.

Excavation, fill, backfill, and finish grading

Foundation area shall be cleared of trees, stumps, roots, sod, and loose rock.

Cross section area shall be excavated to the neat lines and grades as shown on the drawings. Over excavated areas shall be backfilled with moist soil compacted to the density of the surrounding material.

Suitable excavated material may be used as fill and backfill.

Finish grading shall consist of smoothing and grading to form a smooth uniform surface between the existing ground and the top of the concrete lining. When completed the entire disturbed area shall be ready for seeding.

Construction

Concrete lining shall be placed to the thickness, shapes, lines, and grades shown on the drawings. Abrupt deviations from line or grade shall not be permitted. Except for sections of the crossing designed with steel reinforcement that are to be poured in one contiguous unit, the lining shall be formed and placed in alternate sections, not to exceed fifteen (15) feet. Expansion joint filler shall be placed between each section.

Steel reinforcement will be placed at locations shown on the drawings, if applicable.

Earth surface shall be firm and damp where concrete is to be placed.

Placement and curing of concrete shall conform to Missouri Construction Specification 750, Reinforced Concrete.

Additional details: _____
