

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
VIRGINIA CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**SPOIL SPREADING**

(Ac.)

**CODE 572**

**DEFINITION**

Disposing of surplus excavated materials.

**PURPOSE**

- Permit use of land occupied by spoil for agriculture and other purposes
- Facilitate establishing and controlling vegetation along banks
- Provide a travelway along banks for use and maintenance
- Provide borrow for land grading, leveling, or smoothing
- Improve landscape quality

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice applies to sites where spoil material is available from excavation of channels, drainage ditches, irrigation canals, or other construction sites and where it is desirable and economically feasible to achieve one or more purposes.

This practice does not apply if the spread spoil would reduce the carrying capacity of the floodway.

**CRITERIA**

Design and construction activities shall comply with all federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations governing activities in or along streams, pollution abatement, health, and safety. The owner or operator shall be responsible for securing all required permits or approvals and for performing all planned work in accordance with such laws and regulations.

Spoil shall be spread over a designated area according to an approved plan or as modified by a technician at the site.

Spreading shall not be done when the ground or soil is frozen, excessively wet or otherwise in a condition detrimental to the work.

Provisions shall be made for the diversion or safe passage of surface water concentrating on the land side of the spoil-banks along channels, ditches, or canals.

Location and placement of spoil shall be such as to avoid unnecessary destruction of vegetation in existing Riparian Zones as defined in Virginia Conservation Practice Standard *Riparian Forest Buffer (Code 391)* and/or *Riparian Herbaceous Cover (Code 390)*.

The spoil shall be placed so as not to endanger the stability of the ditch bank and shall not exceed 3 feet (ft) in height above the natural ground surface, except by special design. The finished surface shall slope away from the edge of the channel or berm as feasible.

For spoil spreading along channels, ditches, or canals, surfaces of spoil shall not be steeper than 4 horizontal (H) to 1 vertical (V) on the land side and 3 H to 1 V on the channel side if a berm is established.

If the spoil is spread to the edge of the channel, the side slope of the channel side of the spoil shall be shaped to join the side slope of the ditch bank so that loose spoil will not roll or wash into the channel or ditch.

Establishment of vegetation shall begin immediately after spreading unless the spoil will be cropped. If spreading is completed at a time that is not conducive to the establishment

of desired species, temporary erosion control measures, such as Virginia Conservation Practice Standard *Mulching (Code 484)* shall be implemented immediately.

If the spoil material has physical or chemical characteristics that prevent the establishment of adequate vegetative cover, at least 6 inches of topsoil or other suitable soil material shall be placed over the spoil material. Species appropriate to the soil and climate conditions shall be used.

Spoil spreading for other construction sites shall be in accordance with the standard and specification of the applicable conservation practices. Spoil shall be spread to a designed form that blends visually with the landscape.

Contaminated spoil shall be evaluated and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

Where appropriate, use spoil for direct or indirect human benefits such as blocking views, deflecting or redirecting wind or snow, or other uses that may be identified as desirable.

Consider the effects of spoil spreading on the water budget, specifically runoff, infiltration, deep percolation and groundwater recharge.

Consider the effects of dissolved substances and toxics in the spoil on surface and groundwater quality.

Consider the effects of spoil placement on erosion, sediment delivery and downstream water quality.

If spoil areas are established to permanent vegetation, use species that will provide suitable wildlife food and cover.

Place spoil as far as possible from the edge of the channel to minimize damage to riparian Zone 3 [As defined in Virginia Conservation Practice Standard *Filter Strip (Code 393)*, Zone 3 is a strip or area of herbaceous vegetation situated between cropland, grazing land, or disturbed land (including forest land) and environmentally sensitive areas].

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

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

#### **DESIGN DATA**

1. Completed Environmental Evaluation (Form VA-EE-1) and subsequent requirements.
2. Plan view of site with existing and planned features, including dimensions, distances, etc. as needed.
3. Standard Cover Sheet (VA-SO-100A).
4. Vegetation and/or ground cover requirements.
5. Identification of needed Erosion & Sediment Control measures.
6. Virginia Conservation Practice Specifications (700 Series).
7. Operation and Maintenance Plan.

#### **CHECK DATA**

1. As-built survey as needed.
2. Adequacy of vegetation and/or ground cover.
3. Complete as-built section of Cover Sheet.

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Inspect the spoil areas within six months after spreading. Fill or repair any excessive rills or gullies in the spoil. Reestablish vegetation as necessary on the repaired areas.

Mow the vegetation as necessary to maintain a dense, vigorous stand.

Control of undesirable species and/or noxious weeds shall be done as needed.

### **REFERENCES**

1. USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service. National Engineering Handbook, Engineering Field Handbook Ch. 17.

2. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG), Section IV [Online].

Available at  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/eFOTG>

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