

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**FENCE**

(Feet)  
CODE 382

**DEFINITION**

A constructed barrier to livestock, wildlife or people.

**PURPOSES**

This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to facilitate the application of conservation practices that treat the soil, water, air, plant animal and human resource concerns.

**CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice may be applied on any area where livestock and/or wildlife control is needed, where moisture accumulation and wind protection is needed for new plantings, or where access to people is to be regulated. Fences are not needed where natural barriers will serve the purpose.

**CRITERIA**

Fencing materials shall be of a high quality and durability, and the construction performed to meet the intended management objectives.

Fences shall be positioned to facilitate management requirements.

Standard or conventional (barbed or smooth wire), suspension, woven wire, or electric fences shall consist of acceptable fencing designs to control the animal(s) or people of concern and meet the intended life of the practice.

Height, number, and spacing of wires will be installed to facilitate control and management of the animal(s) and people of concern.

Height, size, spacing and type of posts will be used that best provides the needs for the style of fence required and is best suited for the topography of the landscape.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Consider installing fences in locations that will facilitate maintenance by avoiding irregular terrain and/or water crossings.

Consider wildlife movement needs when locating fences.

Consider livestock management, handling, watering and feeding when locating fences.

Boundary fences shall comply with state laws and standards for construction.

Where applicable, clear right-of-ways will be established which will facilitate fence construction and maintenance.

Consider soil erosion potential when planning and constructing a fence on steep slopes.

**Additional Considerations For Plants:**

Where applicable, consider the use of snow fence to accumulate moisture and retard wind desiccation for new plantings, especially windbreaks. Snow fence designs have not proven successful for control of livestock or big game. When both of these objectives need to be met, a snow fence should be combined with a standard fence.

Separate rangeland from introduced or domesticated perennial or annual pastures to control selectivity by grazing animals.

Equalize pasture size to facilitate "[Prescribed Grazing](#)".

Improve livestock distribution and grazing management of plants by locating fence(s) on ecological site, or distinctive soil, boundaries.

Limit access to livestock watering sites to improve grazing distribution and utilization of plants.

**Additional Considerations For Livestock:**

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resource Conservation Service.
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Reduce livestock deaths resulting from lightning by circuit breakers or grounding of all wires at 100 to 200 feet intervals. Grounding can be accomplished by using steel posts or strapping pipe alongside the wooden posts. Fence wires should be securely fastened for grounding to the posts or pipes with galvanized wire ties.

Enclose stockwater dams with fence, with tank and float valve below the dam, to improve water quality for livestock.

Facilitate handling and feeding by considering availability to work pens, winter shelter, roads and trails.

Control livestock access to known poisonous plant area, especially during the time of year when the plant is most dangerous to livestock health.

**Additional Considerations For Wildlife:**

Where possible, fence design should account for the safe ingress and egress of wildlife.

Where deer, elk, or moose are the primary concern, fences should not be more than 40 inches high.

Where deer are of concern, 12 to 15 inches of space between the top and second wire will help prevent animals from hooking their back legs between the wires when they jump over the fence.

Antelope generally pass under barbed wire 16 inches above the ground or go over net fences 32 inches high. Appropriate openings can be installed across known antelope trails to facilitate safe crossings.

Leave gates open when the managed area is not in use.

Flagging the top wire of a new fence between posts will help give wildlife a height reference. They tend to become accustomed to the height, by the time flagging deteriorates.

Control livestock access to important wildlife habitat areas.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Plans and specifications are to be prepared for specific sites based on this standard and appropriate state or local statutes or laws. Specifications shall be according to the Wyoming NRCS Conservation Practice Specifications.

**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Regular inspection of fences should be part of an on-going management program. Inspection of fences

after storm events is needed to facilitate the function of the intended use of the fence.

Maintenance and repairs will be performed as needed to facilitate the intended operation of the installed fence.