

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**FENCE**

(Ft.)

**CODE 382**

**DEFINITION**

A constructed barrier to animals or people.

**PURPOSE**

This practice facilitates the accomplishment of conservation objectives by providing a means to control movement of animals and people, including vehicles. A fence 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 PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice may be applied on any area where management of animal or human movement is needed. Fences are not needed where natural barriers will serve the purpose.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

Fencing materials, type and design of fence installed shall be of a high quality and durability. The type and design of fence installed will meet the management objectives and site challenges. Based on need, fences may be permanent, portable, or temporary.

Fences shall be positioned to facilitate management requirements. Ingress/egress features such as gates and cattle guards shall be planned. The fence design and installation should have the life expectancy appropriate for management objectives and shall follow all federal, state and local laws and regulations.

Height, size, spacing and type of materials used will provide the desired control, life expectancy, and management of animals and people of concern.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

The fence design and location should consider: topography, soil properties, livestock management and safety, livestock trailing, wildlife class and movement, location and adequacy of water facilities, development of potential grazing systems, human access and safety, landscape aesthetics, erosion problems, moisture conditions, flooding potential, stream crossings, and durability of materials. When appropriate, natural barriers should be utilized instead of fencing.

Where applicable, cleared rights-of-way may be established which would facilitate fence construction and maintenance. Avoid clearing of vegetation during the nesting season for migratory birds.

Fences across gullies, canyons or streams may require special bracing, designs or approaches.

Fence design and location should consider ease of access for construction, repair and maintenance.

Fence construction requiring the removal of existing unusable fence should provide for the proper disposal of scrap materials to prevent harm to animals, people and equipment.

Follow NRCS policy on cultural resources.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Plans and specifications are to be prepared for all fence types, installations and specific sites. Requirements for applying the practice to achieve all of its intended purposes shall be described.

## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Regular inspection of fences should be part of an ongoing maintenance program. Inspection of fences after storms and other disturbance events is necessary to insure the continued proper function of the fence. Maintenance and repairs will be performed in a timely manner as needed, including tree/limb removal and water gap replacement. This includes the prevention of vegetative growth or removal of woody vegetation in the fence.

Remove and properly discard all broken fencing material and hardware. All necessary precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of construction and maintenance crews.

## **REFERENCES**

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