

**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.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice may be applied on any area where management of animal or people movement is needed.

**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 topographic challenges of the site. 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 shall follow all federal, state and local laws and regulations. Criteria for "legally tight" standard field fence can be found in Chapter 359A of the Iowa Code.

Height, size, spacing, and type of materials used will provide the desired control and management of animal and people of concern. Also, the height, size, and spacing, and type of posts installed will best meets the needs for the style of fence required and is best suited for the

topography of the site.

Temporary fencing materials, types, and designs are recommended for interior fencing situations such as interior paddocks, protecting riparian or forest buffers, or other noncritical areas.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

The fence design and location should consider: topography, soil properties, safety and management of livestock, wildlife movement, location and adequacy of water facilities, development of potential grazing systems, human access, 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

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. Avoid installing fences under the drip-line of trees.

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.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Plans and specifications for installing fences shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve all of its intended purposes.

The following list of Construction Specifications is intended as a guide to selecting the appropriate specifications for a specific project. The list includes most but may not contain all of the specifications needed for a specific project:

- IA-1 Site Preparation
- IA-3 Structural Removal
- IA-5 Pollution Control
- IA-81 Metal Fabrication and Installation
- IA-83 Timber Fabrication and Installation
- IA-92 Fences

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Regular inspection of fences should be part of an ongoing maintenance program. Inspection of fences after storm events is necessary to insure the continued proper function of the fence. Maintenance and repairs will be performed in a timely manner as needed.

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

Electric fences will be regularly checked to determine the voltage on the fence. If voltage is not sufficient, determine the cause and correct it. During dry weather, ground rods may need water applied to the soil around them.

Maintain proper tension on the fence wires.

Clear brush and fallen limbs from fence lines to reduce voltage losses. Overhanging limbs should be trimmed or removed as needed to prevent damage to fence.

Electrified floodgates must be maintained and kept free of debris. During extended flooding periods, switch the floodgates off.

Warning signs should be posted on power fences at regular intervals in areas that people have easy access to the fence, such as along roads, developed areas, and farmsteads.

When using an electric fence, a training area should be used to condition livestock to the fence. Select a well-fenced area and construct an electric fence across, or around, the area to allow the animals to come in contact with the electric fence. Normally, a minimum of 12 hours

of exposure to the electric fence is required. Most animals will be trained fully in 48 hours.

### **REFERENCES**

Iowa Administrative Code, Chapter 359A, Fences.

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Iowa Field Office Technical Guide, Section IV, Conservation Practice Standards and Specifications.

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Engineering Handbook, Part 650, Engineering Field Handbook.

US Dept of Interior, Bureau of Land Management and USDA, Forest Service. Fences. Missoula Technology and Development Center.

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service - Missouri, Electric Fencing for Serious Graziers.

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Range and Pasture Handbook.

Wyoming Game and Fish Department, WY Habitat Extension Bulletin No. 53, Fencing Guidelines for Wildlife.

Many fencing companies have reference material available for use. Use prudence in reviewing their recommendations.