

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

**VEGETATIVE BARRIERS
(Feet)
CODE 601**

DEFINITION

Permanent strips of stiff, dense vegetation along the general contour of slopes or across concentrated flow areas.

PURPOSE

- Reduce sheet and rill erosion.
- Reduce ephemeral gully erosion.
- Manage water flow.
- Stabilize steep slopes.
- Trap sediment.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The following actions will be carried out to insure that this practice functions as intended. These actions include normal activities in the application and use of the practice and repair and maintenance of the practice.

1. Establishment failures will be replanted or reseeded immediately, short gaps in seeded barriers may be reestablished more effectively and immediately with transplanted plant material.
2. Mowing of herbaceous barriers may be used as a management practice to encourage the development of a dense stand and prevent shading of crops in adjacent fields. Mowing will not be closer than 15 inches or the recommended height for the species, whichever is taller. Mowing will be scheduled to coincide with access through crops in adjacent fields. Mowing in concentrated flow areas is discouraged because it will lower the vegetative stiffness index (VSI) by reducing average stem diameter.
3. Burning of herbaceous barriers may be used as a management practice, based on a case by case analysis, to encourage the development of a dense stand and prevent the accumulation of residue in the barrier. Burning will be performed when the vegetation is dormant and with adequate supervision to prevent the fire from damaging surrounding areas. A controlled burn plan will be required.
4. Weed control will be accomplished by mowing or by spraying or wick application of labeled herbicides.
5. Vegetation in the barrier will be tolerant to or protected from herbicide used in the cropped field.
6. Crop tillage and planting operations will be parallel with the vegetative barrier.
7. Pest control in adjacent fields will be performed with techniques and pesticides that will not damage the vegetative barrier.
8. Washouts or rills that develop will be filled and replanted immediately. Short gaps in established barriers will be reestablished with transplanted plant material.
9. Vegetative barriers will not be used as a field road or turn row. Vegetative barriers in concentrated flow areas will not be crossed with machinery.
10. Vegetative barriers will not be crossed with water furrow plows or similar implements to cut drainage ditches to allow the passage of surface and subsurface water. If necessary, water will be drained with underground outlets installed up gradient of the barrier.