

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD
CONNECTICUT**

WASTE TREATMENT LAGOON

(No.)

CODE 359

DEFINITION

A waste treatment impoundment made by constructing an embankment and/or excavating a pit or dugout.

PURPOSE

To reduce organic pollutants in agricultural wastewater by using biological, physical, and chemical processes in an aerobic environment.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

- Where the lagoon is a component of an approved comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP).
- Where treatment is needed for organic wastes generated by agricultural production or processing.
- On any site where the lagoon can be constructed, operated and maintained without polluting air or water resources.
- To lagoons utilizing embankments with an effective height of 25 feet or less where damage resulting from failure would be limited to damage of farm buildings, agricultural land, or township and country roads.

CRITERIA

General Criteria for All Lagoons

Laws and Regulations. All Federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations, including local inland wetland agency regulations, governing the construction and use of this practice as well as setbacks from wells, surface water and property boundaries

must be followed. Planned work shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws and permit conditions and requirements. The landowner shall obtain all necessary permits prior to construction or any land clearing activities.

Location. To minimize the potential for contamination of streams, lagoons should be located outside of floodplains. However, if site restrictions require location within a floodplain, they shall be protected from inundation or damage from a 25-year flood event, or larger if required by laws, rules, and regulations. Lagoons shall be located so the potential impacts from breach of embankment, accidental release, and liner failure are minimized; and separation distances are such that prevailing winds and landscape elements such as building arrangement, landforms, and vegetation minimize odors and protect aesthetic values.

Lagoons should be located so they have as little drainage area as possible. If a lagoon has a drainage area, the volume of normal runoff during the treatment period and 25-year, 24-hour storm event runoff shall be included in the required volume of the lagoon.

Separation Distances. Locate waste treatment lagoons considering prevailing winds and landscape elements such as building arrangement, landforms, and vegetation to minimize odors and protect the visual resources. Separation distances from residences and buildings, property lines, surface water bodies including wetlands, private wells or springs, and/or public wells shall be determined on a case by case basis in consultation with appropriate state or local

regulatory agencies.

Use the following separation distances for preliminary planning purposes only.

Residences and businesses – Owner-Operator	250 feet
Residences and businesses - Other	500 feet
Property lines	250 feet
Public Roads	250 feet
Drinking Water Supply Lines	150 feet
Surface water bodies	250 feet
Private well or spring	150 feet
Public water supply well	500 feet
Above seasonal high water table	24 in.
Depth to bedrock	48 in.*
* Per CT Health Code. May reduce with DEP concurrence if lined.	

Soils and Foundation. The lagoon shall be located in soils with an acceptable permeability that meets all applicable regulations, or the lagoon shall be lined. Information and guidance on controlling seepage from waste impoundments can be found in the Agricultural Waste Management Field Handbook (AWMFH), Appendix 10D.

The lagoon shall have a bottom elevation that is a minimum of 2 feet above the seasonal high water table unless special design features are incorporated that address buoyant forces, lagoon seepage rates, and non-encroachment of the water table by contaminants. The water table may be lowered by use of perimeter drains to meet this requirement.

Flexible Membranes. All lagoons shall be installed with a liner unless a detailed risk assessment determines otherwise. The risk assessment shall include an analysis of subsurface travel time of potential leachates and the predicted environmental effects of those leachates. Flexible membrane liners shall meet or exceed the requirements of Connecticut NRCS Standard 521, Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membranes

Required Volume. The lagoon shall have the capability of storing the following volumes:

- Volume of accumulated sludge for the period between sludge removal events;
- Minimum treatment volume (anaerobic lagoons only);
- Volume of manure, wastewater, and other wastes accumulated during the treatment period;
- Depth of normal precipitation less evaporation on the surface area (at the required volume level) of the lagoon during the treatment period;
- Depth of the 25-year, 24-hour storm precipitation on the surface area (at the required volume level) of the lagoon;
- 25-year, 24-hour runoff from the lagoon drainage area;
- A minimum of one foot shall be provided for freeboard
- Additional storage as may be required to meet management goals or regulatory requirements.

Treatment Period. The treatment period is the detention time between drawdown events. It shall be the greater of either 60 days; or the time required to provide the storage that allows environmentally safe utilization of waste considering the climate, crops, soil, and equipment requirements; or as required by local, state, and Federal regulations.

Waste Loading. Daily waste loading shall be based on the maximum daily loading considering all waste sources that will be treated by the lagoon. Reliable local information or laboratory test data should be used if available. If local information is not available Chapter 4 of the AWMFH may be used for estimating waste loading.

Embankments. The minimum elevation of the top of the settled embankment shall be 1 foot above the lagoon's required volume. This height shall be increased by the amount needed to ensure that the top elevation will be maintained after settlement. This increase shall be not less than 5 percent. The minimum top widths are shown in Table 1. The combined side slopes of the settled embankment shall not be less than 5

horizontal to 1 vertical, and neither slope shall be steeper than 2 horizontal to 1 vertical unless provisions are made to provide stability.

Table 1 – Minimum Top Widths

Total embankment Height, ft.	Top Width, ft.
15 or less	8
15 – 20	10
20 – 25	12

Foundation cutoff trenches shall be installed below earthen embankments. Earthen embankments shall be compacted to a minimum of 90% standard proctor density.

Excavations. Unless supported by a soil investigation, excavated side slopes shall be no steeper than 2 horizontal to 1 vertical.

Inlet. Inlets shall be of any permanent type designed to resist corrosion, plugging, freeze damage, and ultraviolet ray deterioration, while incorporating erosion protection as necessary. Inlets shall be provided with a water-sealed trap and vent, or similar device if there is a potential, based on design configuration, for gases to enter buildings or other confined spaces.

Outlet. Outlets from the required volume shall be designed to resist corrosion and plugging. No outlet shall automatically discharge from the required volume of the lagoon.

Facility for Drawdown. Measures that facilitate safe drawdown of the liquid level in the lagoon shall be provided. Access areas and ramps used to withdraw waste shall have slopes that facilitate a safe operating environment. Docks, wells, pumping platforms, retaining walls, etc. shall permit drawdown without causing erosion or damage to liners.

Sludge Removal. Provision shall be made for periodic removal of accumulated sludge to preserve the treatment capacity of the lagoon.

Erosion Protection. Embankments and disturbed areas surrounding the lagoon shall be treated to control erosion. This includes the inside slopes of the lagoon as needed to protect the integrity of the liner.

Safety. Design shall include appropriate safety features to minimize the hazards of the lagoon. The lagoon shall be fenced around the perimeter and warning signs posted to prevent children and others from using it for other than its intended purpose.

Additional Criteria for Naturally Aerobic Lagoons

Loading Rate. Naturally aerobic lagoons shall be designed to have a minimum treatment surface area as determined on the basis of daily BOD₅ loading per unit of lagoon surface. The required minimum treatment surface area shall be the surface area at maximum drawdown. The maximum loading rate shall be as indicated by AWMFH Figure 10-25 or according to state regulatory requirements, whichever is more stringent.

Operating Levels. The maximum operating level shall be the lagoon level that provides the required volume less the 25-year, 24-hour storm event on the lagoon surface. The maximum drawdown level shall be the lagoon level that provides volume for the volume of manure, wastewater, and clean water accumulated during the treatment period plus the volume of accumulated sludge between sludge removal events. Permanent markers shall be installed at these elevations. The proper operating range of the lagoon is above the maximum drawdown level and below the maximum operating level. These markers shall be referenced and described in the O&M plan.

Depth Requirements. The minimum depth at maximum drawdown shall be 2 feet. The maximum liquid level shall be 5 feet.

Additional Criteria for Mechanically Aerated Lagoons

Loading Rate. The treatment function for a mechanically aerated waste treatment lagoon shall be designed on the basis of daily BOD₅ loading and aeration equipment manufacturer's performance data for oxygen transfer and mixing. Aeration equipment shall provide a minimum of 1 pound of oxygen for each pound of daily BOD₅ loading.

Operating Levels. The maximum operating level shall be the lagoon level that provides the required lagoon volume less the 25-year,

24-hour storm event precipitation and shall not exceed the site and aeration equipment limitations. A permanent marker or recorder shall be installed at this elevation. The proper operating range of the lagoon is below this elevation and above the minimum treatment elevation established by the manufacturer of the aeration equipment. This marker shall be referenced and described in the O&M plan.

CONSIDERATIONS

General

Lagoons should be located as close to the source of waste as possible.

Solid/liquid separation treatment should be considered between the waste source and the lagoon to reduce loading.

The configuration of the lagoon should be based on the method of sludge removal and method of sealing.

Due consideration should be given to economics, the overall waste management system plan, and safety and health factors.

Considerations for Minimizing the Potential for and Impacts of Sudden Breach of Embankment or Accidental Release from the Required Volume

Features, safeguards, and/or management measures to minimize the risk of embankment failure or accidental release, or to minimize or mitigate impact of this type of failure should be considered when any of the categories listed in Table 2 might be significantly affected.

Table 2- Potential Impact Categories from Breach of Embankment or Accidental Release

1. Surface water bodies -- perennial streams, lakes, wetlands, and estuaries
2. Critical habitat for threatened and endangered species
3. Riparian areas
4. Farmstead, or other areas of habitation
5. Off-farm property
6. Historical and/or archaeological sites or structures that meet the eligibility criteria for listing in the National Register of Historical Places

The following should be considered either singly or in combination to minimize the potential of or the consequences of sudden breach of embankments when one or more of the potential impact categories listed in Table 2 may be significantly affected:

- An auxiliary (emergency) spillway
- Additional freeboard
- Storage volume for the wet year rather than normal year precipitation
- Reinforced embankment -- such as, additional top width, flattened and/or armored downstream side slopes
- Secondary containment
- Water level indicators or recorders

The following should be considered to minimize the potential for accidental release from the required volume through gravity outlets when one or more of the potential impact categories listed in Table 2 may be significantly affected:

- Outlet gate locks or locked gate housing
- Secondary containment
- Alarm system
- Another means of emptying the required volume

Considerations for Minimizing the Potential of Lagoon Liner Seepage

Consideration should be given to providing an additional measure of safety from lagoon seepage when any of the potential impact categories listed in Table 3 may be affected.

Table 3 - Potential Impact Categories for Liner Seepage

1. Any underlying aquifer is at a shallow depth and not confined
2. The vadose zone is rock
3. The aquifer is a domestic water supply or ecologically vital water supply
4. The site is located in an area of carbonate rock (limestone or dolomite)

Should any of the potential impact categories listed in Table 3 be affected, consideration should be given to the following:

- A clay liner designed in accordance with procedures of AWMFH, Appendix 10D with a thickness and coefficient of permeability so that specific discharge is less than 1×10^{-6} cm/sec.
- A flexible membrane liner
- A geosynthetic clay liner (GCL) flexible membrane liner
- A concrete liner designed in accordance with slabs on grade criteria, Waste Storage Facility (313), for fabricated structures requiring water tightness.

Considerations for Improving Air Quality

To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, ammonia, volatile organic compounds, and odor:

- Reduce the recommended loading rate for anaerobic lagoons to one-half the values given in AWMFH Figure 10-22.
- Use additional Connecticut NRCS Standards such as 365, Anaerobic Digester – Ambient Temperature, 366, Anaerobic Digester – Controlled Temperature, 367, Waste Facility Cover, and 317, Composting Facility in the waste management system.
- Liquid/solid separation prior to discharge to lagoon will reduce volatile solids (VS) loading resulting in reduced gaseous emissions and odors. Composting of solids will further reduce emissions.
- Design lagoons to be naturally aerobic or to allow mechanical aeration.

Adjusting pH below 7 may reduce ammonia emissions from the lagoon but may increase odor when waste is surface applied (See Connecticut NRCS Practice Standard 633, Waste Utilization).

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose. Plans and specifications shall include construction plans, drawings, job sheets or other similar documents. These documents shall as a

minimum, specify the requirements for installing the practice and include the kind, quantity and quality of materials to be used.

To the extent practical, specifications shall conform to NRCS National Engineering Handbook Parts 642 and 643 (Section 20).

AS BUILT DRAWINGS

As built drawings shall be prepared showing all pertinent elements and elevations as actually installed. As built data and drawings will be provided to the owner/operator, regulatory state agency and participating partners upon construction completion.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An Operation and Maintenance (O&M) plan shall be prepared for, reviewed and signed by the landowner or operator. The plan shall specify that the structure be inspected annually and after significant storm events to identify repair and operation and maintenance needs. For livestock operations, the O&M plan shall be included as a part of the CNMP. O&M activities shall be documented by the landowner or operator in a record keeping system.

The O&M plan shall be consistent with the purposes of the practice, its intended life, safety requirements, and the criteria for design. The plan shall contain the operational requirements for annual drawdown and the role of permanent markers. This shall include the requirement that solids or excess waste water removed from the lagoon be utilized at locations, times, rates, and volumes specified. This shall also include drawdown provisions following unusual storm events. Disposition of solids or liquid waste from the lagoon shall be in accordance with provisions of the CNMP and Connecticut NRCS Practice Standard 633, Waste Utilization.

Development of an emergency action plan shall be developed for lagoons where there is a potential for significant impact from breach or accidental release. The plan shall include site-specific provisions for emergency actions that will minimize these impacts.