

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

HEAVY USE AREA PROTECTION

(Ac.)

CODE 561

DEFINITION

The stabilization of areas frequently and intensively used by people, animals or vehicles by establishing vegetative cover, surfacing with suitable materials, and/or installing needed structures.

PURPOSE

- To provide a stable, non-eroding surface for areas frequently used by animals, people or vehicles
- To protect and improve water quality

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

Where an assessment indicates that treatment is required to address one or more resource concerns on urban, suburban, agricultural (where livestock is not present), or other frequently and intensively used areas.

On agricultural land, where livestock is present and where the practice is a component of an approved comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP).

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

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 shall 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.

Design Load. Base the design load on the type and frequency of traffic, (vehicular, animal, or human) anticipated on the heavy use area.

Foundation. Evaluate all site foundations for soil moisture, permeability, texture and bearing strength based on the design load and planned frequency of use.

Where necessary, prepare the foundation by removal and disposal of materials that are not adequate to support the design loads.

Use a base course of gravel, crushed stone, other suitable material and/or geotextile on all sites that need increased load bearing strength, drainage, separation of material and soil reinforcement. Refer to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Engineering Handbook, Parts 642 and Design Note 24, Guide for Use of Geotextiles, for guidance on geotextile selection.

On sites with porous foundations (high permeability rate), with a need to protect ground water from contamination, provide an impervious barrier.

Surface Treatment. Select a surface treatment that is stable and appropriate to the purpose of the heavy use area. Surface treatments must meet the following requirements according to the material used.

Concrete. Design the thickness and compressive strength of concrete according to the expected loading and use. For installations where it is necessary to limit the permeability of the concrete, refer to Connecticut NRCS Standard 313, Waste

Storage Facility and ACI 360R-06, Design of Slabs-on-Ground, for design criteria for slabs on grade.

Bituminous Concrete Pavement. Refer to *AASHTO Guide for Design of Pavement Structures* or the applicable state department of highway's specification for design criteria for bituminous concrete paving.

In lieu of a site specific design, for areas that will be subject to light use, pave with a minimum of 4 inches of compacted bituminous concrete over a subgrade of at least 4 inches of well compacted gravel. Use bituminous concrete mixtures commonly used for road paving in the area. Compact the surface with a heavy steel wheel roller until the bituminous concrete is thoroughly compacted and roller marks are eliminated.

Other Cementitious Materials. Other cementitious materials such as soil cement, roller compacted concrete, and coal combustion by-products (flue gas desulphurization sludge and fly ash) can be used to provide a durable, stable surfacing material. Develop site specific mix designs based on the properties of the material with compressive strengths necessary for the expected use and loading on the heavy use area.

Aggregate. Design fine or coarse aggregate surfaces at least 4-inches thick. If the surface will be compacted, choose a well graded aggregate.

Sprays and Artificial Mulches. When utilizing sprays of asphalt, oil, plastic, manufactured mulches, and similar materials, follow the manufacturer's recommendations for design requirements.

Other. Surfacing materials, such as limestone screenings, cinders, tanbark, bark mulch, brick chips, shredded rubber and/or sawdust, shall have a minimum layer thickness of 4 inches.

Structures. Design any structures associated with the heavy use area including roofs, according to appropriate NRCS standards. Where NRCS standards do not exist, design structures according to the requirements of the particular construction material and accepted engineering practice. Base environmental design loads for buildings associated with

heavy use areas on criteria in ASCE 7 - Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures: ASCE/SEI 7-05.

Drainage and Erosion Control. Include provisions in the design for surface and subsurface drainage, as needed. Include provisions for disposal of runoff without causing erosion or water quality impairment. To the extent possible, prevent runoff from entering the heavy use area.

Vegetative Measures. Where appropriate, stabilize all areas disturbed by construction with vegetation as soon as possible after construction. Refer to Connecticut NRCS Standards 327, Conservation Cover and/or 342, Critical Area Planting. If vegetation is not appropriate for the site, use other measures to stabilize the area.

Separation Distances. Separation distances from residences and buildings, property lines, surface water bodies including wetlands, private or public wells or springs, seasonal high water table and/or bedrock 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.	

Soils, Geology, Liners, Leachate Collection and Transfer. Information and guidance on controlling seepage from waste impoundments can be found in the Agricultural Waste Management Field Handbook (AWMFH), Appendix 10D. Locate composting facilities on soils having very slow to slow permeability

(permeability rate less than 1.0×10^{-6} cm/sec.) to minimize infiltration of dissolved substances (leachate) into the groundwater. In the absence of suitable soils, impermeable liners as described in Connecticut NRCS Standard 313, Waste Storage Facility shall be used. In addition, a collection and transfer system may be needed as described in Connecticut NRCS Standard 634, Waste Transfer. All compost facilities shall require analysis of deep (± 8) test pits prior to final site approval.

Runoff, Drainage, Flooding. Divert surface runoff from outside drainage areas around the heavy use area. Provide a cover to exclude precipitation or collect runoff from the HUA and utilize or dispose of it in accordance with the approved operation and maintenance plan. Evaluate the effects of changed infiltration conditions on groundwater recharge, and evaluate changes in volumes and rates of runoff caused by the location of the operation. Minimize the movement of organic material, soluble substances, and substances attached to solids carried by runoff. HUA surfaces shall be either concrete, soil cement, or compacted well graded gravel or crushed stone, and designed with slopes of 1% or less but not so flat as to cause ponding. If compacted gravel is used as a pad, a top layer of sand may be installed to avoid gravel-sized particles in the final compost product. Surrounding topography shall be 4% or less. If located on a floodplain, the composting facility shall be protected from flooding due to at least a 25-year frequency event. Subsurface drainage may be required to lower groundwater levels upgradient from and under compost pads.

Covers. Roof structures shall be in accordance with the 2006 ICC International Building Code, International Code Council (formerly BOCA, ICBO, and SBCCI), March, 2006 and local building codes. HUA covers shall be in accordance with Connecticut NRCS Standard 367, Roofs and Covers and/or Connecticut NRCS Standard 313, Waste Storage Facility.

Additional Criteria for Livestock Heavy Use Areas

The treated area can include all areas where livestock congregate and cause surface stability problems. This includes feeding

areas, portable hay rings, watering facilities, feeding troughs, mineral boxes and other facilities where livestock concentrations cause resource concerns.

Use Connecticut NRCS Standards 367, Roofs and Covers, 634, Manure Transfer, 327, Conservation Cover, 342, Critical Area Planting, 382, Fencing, 528, Prescribed Grazing, 635, Vegetated Treatment Area, 472, Access Control, or other similar standards as companion practices, when needed to meet the intended purpose of the heavy use area protection.

Include provisions in the design of the heavy use area to collect, store, utilize and/or treat manure and contaminated runoff in accordance with the requirements of the CNMP

Additional Criteria for Recreation Areas

Heavy use protection in recreation areas that are accessible to the public must meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

CONSIDERATIONS

Heavy use areas can have a significant impact on adjoining land uses. These impacts can be environmental, visual and cultural. Care should be taken when selecting the type of treatment to ensure that it is compatible with adjoining areas. Consider such things as proximity to neighbors, utilities, cultural resources, environmentally sensitive areas and the land use where the stabilization will take place. Stabilization techniques used in a cattle feeding area may not be appropriate for a recreation area.

By its very nature, a heavy use area will be subject to intensive use. If vegetation will be part of the stabilization technique, consider the durability of the vegetation. Choose plant species that can withstand the expected use. Additional techniques such as geogrids, other reinforcing techniques or planned periods of rest and recovery may need to be employed to ensure that vegetative stabilization will succeed.

Heavy use areas will be intensely used by animals, people or both. Consider the safety of the users both human and animal during the

design. Avoid slippery surfaces, sharp corners or surfaces and structures that might entrap users. For heavy use areas used by livestock avoid the use of sharp aggregates that might injure livestock hooves.

For livestock heavy use areas, provide positive drainage to prevent ponding of water. Such wet areas can have adverse affects on animal health and comfort.

Heavy use area protection often involves paving or otherwise reducing the permeability of the heavily used area. This can reduce infiltration and increase surface runoff. Depending on the size of the heavy use area, this can have an impact on the water budget of the surrounding area. During the planning and design, consider the effects to ground and surface water.

Heavy use areas are places where animals, people or vehicles are concentrated. The resulting manure, sediments, bacteria, petroleum products and trash that might accumulate on the heavy use area can result in degraded runoff water quality. During planning and design consider how these pollutants will be handled to reduce offsite impacts.

To reduce the negative water quality impact of heavy use areas consider locating them as far as possible from waterbodies or water courses. In some cases this may require relocating the heavily used area rather than just armoring an area that is already in use.

Surface erosion can be a problem on large heavy use areas that do not use a hard surface such as concrete. In these cases the designer may need to include measures on the area that reduce the flow length of runoff to reduce erosion problems.

To reduce the potential for air quality problems from particulate matter associated with heavy use areas, consider the use of NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380), Herbaceous Wind Barriers (603) or the use of palliative treatments such as lignosulfonate, synthetic polymers, organic oils, or chloride compounds to control dust from bare heavy use areas.

Heavy use areas for livestock can vary widely in size depending on how the operator manages his livestock. Because heavy use areas can be expensive to construct and maintain, a significant consideration should be to reduce the size of the heavy use area as much as possible. This may require changes in how the livestock are managed but in the long run may result in less maintenance and a more efficient operation.

For areas that will need to be cleaned frequently by scraping, loose aggregate or other non-cementitious materials may not be the best choice. Consider a more durable surface such as concrete.

Byproducts from coal fired power plants such as fly ash and sludge from scrubbers can vary significantly. Therefore, their toxicity and cementation characteristics should be known to ensure they are compatible with the intended use.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Prepare plans and specifications for Heavy Use Area Protection that describe the requirements for installing the practice according to this standard.

To the extent practical, specifications shall conform to NRCS National Engineering Handbook Part 642.

As a minimum the plans and specifications shall include:

1. A plan view showing the location and extent of the practice.
2. Where appropriate, cross-sections showing the type and required thickness of paving or stabilization materials.
3. Where appropriate, plans for required structural details.
4. Where appropriate, vegetation establishment requirements.
5. Construction specifications that describe in writing site specific installation requirements for the heavy use area protection.

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 with, and signed by the landowner or operator responsible for the application of this practice. The O&M Plan shall provide specific instructions for proper operation and maintenance of each component of this practice and shall detail the level of repairs needed to maintain the effectiveness and useful life of the practice.

The plan shall specify that the treated areas and associated practices are inspected annually and after significant storm events to identify repair and maintenance needs.

For livestock operations, the O&M plan for heavy use areas shall be included as a part of the CNMP and shall address periodic removal and management of manure accumulations and/or contaminated runoff.

For livestock operations, the O&M plan shall contain a statement that the heavy use area shall not be used to house livestock, store feed, store manure, nor store or maintain machinery or equipment.

Where vegetation is specified, provide for periodic mowing, fertilization and control of weeds.

The long-term maintenance plan should include conservation practices limit particulate matter emission

REFERENCES

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