

**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 human movement is needed.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

All Federal, state, 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, local laws, permit conditions and requirements. The landowner shall obtain all necessary permits prior to construction or any land clearing activities.

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 objectives, fences may be permanent, portable, or temporary. Generally, perimeter fences should be permanent and internal fences will be fixed or mobile.

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

regulations. The life span of this practice is 20 years.

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

Fences shall be designed, located, and installed to meet appropriate local wildlife and land management needs and requirements.

Use Connecticut Standard Drawings with standard or conventional barbed or smooth wire, suspension, woven wire, wood or electric fences to provide control of animals or people.

The minimum acceptable standard shall be the CT Standard Drawings. If Standard Drawings are not used, the State Resource Conservationist shall approve designs on a case by case basis if needed. When available, plans and designs shall meet manufacturer installation recommendations.

For domestic livestock, the following minimum criteria or equivalent shall be used for fence:

- Dairy Cows – Three or four wire
- Beef – Three or four wire
- Heifers/Bulls – Four or five wire
- Sheep/Goats – Woven wire
- Hogs – Woven wire plus one bottom wire
- Horses – Woven wire plus top board or all boards
- Combination of livestock (livestock type dependant) – Woven wire plus one top and one bottom wire

Board Fencing made of wooden posts and boards or recycled materials may also be installed, providing it serves the intended resource concern and practice lifespan.

When fencing is installed for rotational grazing, the installation may be either fixed or portable.

Portable may be single strand, double strand or electrified netting.

For high-tensile fences, installation shall include proper corner braces, tensioners, springs, grounding, fence post insulators, and dips/high spots/angle change bracing. To ensure proper installation, refer to experienced or trained installers, or fence installation manuals that meet the standard.

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

To prevent harm to animals, people and equipment, the landowner and/or operator is responsible for completely picking up and properly disposing of all scrap materials. Scrap materials include all materials from removal of existing unusable fence as well as all new construction scrap materials.

Trees shall not be used as posts. In case by case instances they may be approved by the State Resource Conservationist. Metal materials must be removed from trees after lifespan of practice.

CONSIDERATIONS

The fence design and location should consider: topography, soil properties, frost heaving potential, livestock management, animal safety, livestock trailing, access to water facilities, development of potential grazing systems, human access and safety, landscape aesthetics, erosion problems, soil moisture conditions, flooding potential, stream crossings, and durability of materials. When appropriate, existing barriers (such as sides of buildings, but not objects such as trees) 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.

Where applicable, fences should be marked to enhance visibility as a safety measure for animals or people.

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.

One or more wires may be electrified.

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.

Refer to the National Engineering Handbook (NEH) construction specifications 92 for field fence.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Regular inspection of fences should be part of an ongoing maintenance program to ensure continuing proper function of the fence. Operation and Maintenance (O&M) includes the following:

- A schedule for regular inspections and after storms and other disturbance events.

Maintenance activities:

- Repair or replacement of loose or broken fencing material, gates and other forms of entrances/exits.
- Removal of trees/limbs and other vegetation affecting the structural and functional integrity of the fence.
- Maintain proper tension on the fence wires.
- Repair eroded areas affecting the functionality of the fence as necessary.
- Repair or replace markers or other safety and control features as required.
- Inspect electric fence regularly to determine the voltage on the fence. If voltage is not sufficient, determine the cause and correct.
- Inspect after storm events and after the spring of the year after frost has left the ground. Return all posts and other fence material to proper depth and placement.

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