

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**LAND SMOOTHING**

(Acre)  
CODE 466

**DEFINITION**

Removing irregularities on the land surface by use of special equipment.

**SCOPE**

This practice applies to operations classed as rough grading. Ordinarily, this does not require a complete grid survey. It does not apply to the “floating” done as a regular maintenance practice on irrigated land or the “planning” done as the final step in Precision Land Forming (462) or in Irrigation Land Leveling (464).

**PURPOSE**

Improve surface drainage, provide for more effective use of precipitation, obtain more uniform planting depths, provide for more uniform cultivation, improve equipment operation and efficiency, improve terrace alinement, and facilitate contour cultivation.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice applies on areas where depressions, mounds, old terraces, turn rows, and other surface irregularities interfere with the application of needed

soil and water conservation and management practices.

It is limited to areas having adequate soil depth or where topsoil can be salvaged and replaced.

**DESIGN CRITERIA**

The extent of rough grading required and tolerances of the finished smoothing job shall be in keeping with the requirements of the planned cropping system.

**PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR WATER QUANTITY AND QUALITY**

*Quantity*

1. Effects on the water budget, especially on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, and evaporation.
2. Potential for changes in plant growth and transpiration because of changes in the volume of soil water.

*Quality*

1. Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

2. Effects on the use and management of nutrients and pesticides.
3. Effects on downstream water quality.
4. Potential for earth moving to uncover or redistribute toxic materials, such as saline soils.
5. Effects on the visual quality of downstream water resources.

## **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Plans and specifications for land smoothing shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

## Land Smoothing Specifications

Construction operations shall be carried out in such a manner that erosion and air and water pollution are minimized and held within legal limits.

The land to be smoothed shall be cleared of vegetative matter and trash.

Irregularities shall be smoothed to the degree required for the planned use and the requirements of subsequent tillage, floating, or planing to be performed.

Where possible, the ground surface should be plowed or disked prior to smoothing

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