

**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

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.

Fences shall be positioned to facilitate management requirements. Ingress/egress features such as gates and cattle guards shall be planned. The fence design and installation should have the life expectancy appropriate for management objectives and shall follow all federal, state and local laws and regulations. Criteria for "legally tight" standard field fence can be found in Chapter 359A of the Iowa Code.

Height, size, spacing and type of materials used will provide the desired control, life expectancy, and management of animals and people of concern. Also, the height, size, spacing, and type of posts installed will best meet the needs for the style of fence required and is best suited for the topography of the site.

Temporary fencing materials, types, and designs are recommended for interior fencing situations such as interior paddocks, protecting riparian or forest buffers, or other noncritical areas.

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

CONSIDERATIONS

The fence design and location should consider: topography, soil properties, 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, natural barriers 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.

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

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service [State Office](#) or visit the [Field Office Technical Guide](#).

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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.

The following list of Construction Specifications is intended as a guide to selecting the appropriate specifications for a specific project. The list includes most but may not contain all of the specifications needed for a specific project.

- IA-1 Site Preparation
- IA-3 Structural Removal
- IA-81 Metal Fabrication and Installation
- IA-83 Timber Fabrication and Installation
- IA-92 Fences

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Regular inspection of fences should be part of an ongoing maintenance program to ensure continuing proper function of the fence. Maintenance and repairs will be performed in a timely manner as needed.

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

Retain and properly discard all broken fencing material and hardware. All necessary precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of construction and maintenance crews.

Electric fences will be regularly checked to determine the voltage on the fence. If voltage is not sufficient, determine the cause and correct it. During dry weather, ground rods may need water applied to the soil around them.

Maintain proper tension on the fence wires.

Clear brush and fallen limbs from fence lines to reduce voltage losses. Overhanging limbs should be trimmed or removed as needed to prevent damage to fence.

Electrified floodgates must be maintained and kept free of debris. During extended flooding periods, switch the floodgates off.

Warning signs should be posted on power fences at regular intervals in areas that people have easy access to the fence, such as along roads, developed areas, and farmsteads.

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When using an electric fence, a training area should be used to condition livestock to the fence. Select a well-fenced area and construct an electric fence across, or around, the area to allow the animals to come in contact with the electric fence. Normally, a minimum of 12 hours of exposure to the electric fence is required. Most animals will be trained fully in 48 hours.

REFERENCES

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- Many fencing companies have reference material available for use. Use prudence in reviewing their recommendations.