

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
PACIFIC BASIN AREA
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

FENCE

(Meters, Feet)

CODE 382

DEFINITION

A constructed barrier to livestock, wildlife or people.

PURPOSES

This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to facilitate the application of conservation practices that treat the soil, water, air, plant animal and human resource concerns. Fences facilitate one or more of the following purposes:

- To provide for rotation or deferment of grazing lands;
- To provide better distribution of grazing animals;
- To protect grazing animals from hazardous areas such as poisonous plants, highways, steep slopes, etc.;
- To protect animal or plant resources from trespassers;
- To reduce erosion and avoid water quality degradation through improved distribution of grazing animals; and,
- To improve wildlife habitat quality through implementation of a prescribed grazing system.

CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice may be applied on any area where livestock and/or wildlife control is needed, or where access to people is to be regulated. Fences are not needed where natural barriers will serve the purpose.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable To All The Purposes Stated Above

Fences shall be positioned to facilitate management requirements. Location and construction of all fences will comply with local, and/or state, and federal laws.

The landowner shall obtain any and all required permits prior to construction or any land clearing activity.

Standard or conventional (barbed or smooth wire), suspension, woven wire, or electric fences shall consist of effective fencing designs to control the animal(s) or people of concern and meet the intended life of the practice.

Fencing materials shall be of high quality and durability, and the construction performed to meet the intended management objectives. Components for permanent fence shall meet or exceed the following minimum criteria:

Specific Criteria. All fences shall be designed and installed in accordance with the criteria and specifications included in this standard and in conformance with Section 600.0505(h) of the National Range and Pasture Handbook (1997).

Additional Criteria for Providing Better Distribution of Grazing Animals

Fences shall be located to improve management of natural resources. This is often accomplished by separating areas from others that have differences in palatability, use, or production potential. This may involve separation of ecological sites; reduction in pasture size or separation of different land uses.

Division of pastures shall be consistent with grazing requirements projected by an annual

grazing plan. Annual grazing plans shall be developed in a manner consistent with the Pacific Basin standard, Prescribed Grazing, (528A).

Fence locations shall allow for livestock access to water and working pens from all of the created pastures when possible. If this results in undesirable fence placement, then installation of alternative water sources shall be investigated before the final decision is made.

CONSIDERATIONS

Safety Warning

1. When over-stretched, wire may break and recoil.
2. Eye and hand protection should be utilized when installing fences.

Installation. Wire should be attached to each post on the side receiving the greatest amount of pressure from animals or humans.

Install fence in location that will facilitate maintenance, avoiding irregular terrain, water crossings and narrow corners when possible.

Installing fences along slope contours may reduce sloping stock trails and improve infiltration and reduce soil erosion.

Areas of difficult terrain or areas, which receive periodic standing surface water should be avoided if possible.

Construct cross fences using the shortest possible distance when possible.

Fence right-of-ways should be kept free of weeds, brush and trees, by means of a systemic herbicide or mechanical treatment. Soil sterilizing chemicals should not be used.

Domestic Animals. Install fence in locations that will facilitate livestock management, handling, watering and feeding.

To prevent injury to horses, avoid using barbed wire fences when possible, especially where horses are confined to small areas.

Where necessary construct fences that will adequately prevent livestock, wildlife or humans access to areas where hazards or fragile ecosystems occur.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for installing fence shall be site specific and shall be in keeping with this standard.

Where fence is a component of a system that includes other conservation practices, the plans and specifications for the system shall include details for the fencing. Possible systems include grazing systems with stock water practices

Standard drawings and specifications shall be utilized as applicable. Installations departing from available standard drawings and specifications shall require the preparation of drawings and specifications on a site specific basis.

Fence plans and specifications shall include the following information:

1. Description of the requirements for application of the practice to achieve its intended purpose.
2. Location-field numbers and maps or sketches of the fence locations.
3. Length and how determined
4. Date practice applied
5. Type
6. Height
7. Additional comments pertaining to the site
8. Date and signature of planner.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Maintenance shall be in accordance with the requirements of this standard and in conformance with all laws and regulations pertaining to the locale.

Regular inspection of fences shall be part of the on-going management program. Inspection of fences after major storms shall be performed.

Perform maintenance and repairs as needed to allow the fence to meet its intended purpose.

REFERENCES

1. National Range and Pasture Handbook, Section 600.0505(h)

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2. ASTM Standard A 116 Specifications for Zinc-Coated (Galvanized) Iron or Steel Farm-Field and Railroad Right-of-Way Wire Fencing
3. ASAE Standard EP250.2 Specifications for Farm Fence Construction
4. Pacific Basin FOTG Fencing Technical Note(s)