

**Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Conservation Practice Standard**

**SPOIL SPREADING  
(Ac.)  
CODE 572**

**DEFINITION**

Disposing of surplus excavated materials.

**PURPOSE**

To permit use of land occupied by spoil for agriculture and other purposes, to facilitate establishing and controlling vegetation along banks, to provide a travelway along banks for use and maintenance, to provide borrow for land grading, leveling, or smoothing, or to improve landscape quality.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This standard applies to the disposal of spoil by placing it in surface depressions, by shaping, by spreading it over the surface of adjacent lands along the ditch, canal, or other excavations from which the spoil was removed, or by placing it on other specified areas.

This practice is used on sites where spoil material is available from excavation of channels, drainage ditches, irrigation canals, or other construction sites and where it is desirable and economically feasible to achieve one or more purposes.

**CRITERIA**

Spoil shall be spread over a designated area according to an approved plan or as modified by a technician at the site where authorized in the contract or otherwise feasible. Provisions shall be made for the diversion or safe passage of surface water concentrating on the landside of the spoil-banks along channels, ditches, or canals. Location and placement of spoil should be such as to avoid unnecessary destruction of riparian vegetation.

The spoil shall be placed so as not to

endanger the stability of the ditch bank and shall not exceed 3 ft. (0.9 m) in height above the natural ground surface, except by special design. The finished surface shall slope away from the edge of the channel or berm as feasible.

For spoil spreading along channels, ditches, or canals, surfaces of spoil shall not be steeper than 4 horizontal to 1 vertical on the landside and 3 horizontal to 1 vertical on the channel side if a berm is established. If the spoil is spread to the edge of the channel, the channel side slope of the spoil shall be shaped to join the side slope of the ditch bank so that loose spoil will not roll or wash into the channel or ditch.

Spoil spreading for other construction sites shall be in accordance with the standard and specification of the applicable conservation practices and shall be shaped to a designed form that blends visually with the landscape. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to using spoil for direct or indirect human benefits such as blocking views, deflecting or redirecting wind or snow, and other uses that may be identified as desirable.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Water quantity

- Effects on the water budget, especially on runoff, infiltration, deep percolation, and ground water recharge.
- Effects on the distribution of snow derived soil moisture.

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

Water quality

- Erosion during establishment.
- Effects of spoil placement on long-term erosion and sediment delivery.
- Whether or not placement causes dissolved substances, including toxins, to enter surface or ground water.
- Effects on visual quality of downstream water.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

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