

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
MONTANA CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

## SPOIL SPREADING (ACRE)

### CODE 572

#### DEFINITION

Disposing of surplus excavated materials.

#### PURPOSE

- Permit use of land occupied by spoil for agriculture and other purposes.
- Facilitate establishing and controlling vegetation along banks.
- Provide a travelway along banks for use and maintenance.
- Provide borrow for land grading, leveling, or smoothing.
- Improve landscape quality.

#### CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies to 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

**This practice shall conform to all Federal, State, Tribal and local laws and regulations. Laws and regulations of particular concern include those involving water rights, land use, pollutions control, property easements, wetlands, preservation of cultural resources, and endangered species.**

Spoil shall be spread over a designated area according to an approved plan or as modified by a technician (**with proper job approval**) at the site.

**Effects on the water budget, especially on runoff, infiltration, deep percolation, and ground water recharge.**

Spreading shall not be done when the ground or soil is frozen, excessively wet or otherwise in a condition detrimental to the work.

Provisions shall be made for the diversion or safe passage of surface water concentrating on the land side of the spoil-banks along channels, ditches, or canals.

**The spoil shall be placed so that it will not interfere with the hydraulics of the channel or hydrology of the watershed.**

Location and placement of spoil shall be such as to avoid destruction of vegetation in Riparian Zones 1 and 2 as defined in **Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV–Practice Standards and Specifications for Conservation** practice standard (Code 391), Riparian Forest Buffer or in **Conservation** practice standard (Code 390), Riparian Herbaceous Cover.

The spoil shall be placed so as not to endanger the stability of the ditch bank and shall not exceed 3 feet (ft) 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 (H) to 1 vertical (V) on the land side and 3 H to 1 V on the channel side if a berm is established.

If the spoil is spread to the edge of the channel, the side slope of the channel side 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.

NRCS, MT  
July 2005

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

**NOTE:** This type of font (AaBbCcDdEe 123..) indicates NRCS National Standards.  
This type of font (AaBbCcDdEe 123..) indicates Montana Supplement.

**Planning consideration for water quality effects of spoil placement on erosion during establishment, long-term erosion and sedimentation delivery will be controlled by establishment of vegetation.**

**Vegetation establishment** shall begin immediately after spreading unless the spoil will be cropped. If spreading is completed at a time that is not conducive to the establishment of desired species, temporary erosion control measures, such as **Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV–Practice Standards and Specifications for Conservation Practice Standard Mulching (Code 484)** shall be implemented immediately.

If the spoil material has physical or chemical characteristics that prevent the establishment of adequate vegetative cover, at least 6 inches (in.) of topsoil or other suitable soil material shall be placed over the spoil material. Species appropriate to the soil and climate conditions shall be used.

Spoil spreading for other construction sites shall be in accordance with the standard and specification of the applicable conservation practices. Spoil shall be spread to a designed form that blends visually with the landscape **and quality of downstream water.**

Contaminated spoil shall be evaluated and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

Where appropriate, use spoil for direct or indirect human benefits such as blocking views, deflecting or redirecting wind or snow, or other uses that may be identified as desirable.

If spoil areas are established to permanent vegetation, use species that will provide suitable wildlife food and cover.

Place spoil as far as possible from the edge of the channel to minimize damage to riparian zone 3 [as defined in **Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV–Practice Standards and Specifications for Conservation Practice Standard Filter Strip (Code 393)**, zone 3 is a strip or area of herbaceous vegetation situated between cropland, grazing land, or disturbed land (including forest land) and environmentally sensitive areas].

### **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.

**Included within the plans and/or specifications shall be a process to pre-wash or clean all construction equipment use for installation of this practice to control noxious weeds, or other undesired vegetation as required by the landowner.**

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Inspect the spoil areas within six months after spreading. Fill or repair any excessive rills or gullies in the spoil. Re-establish vegetation as necessary on the repaired areas.

Mow the vegetation as necessary to maintain a dense, vigorous stand.

Control of undesirable species and/or noxious weeds shall be done as needed.