



**VIRGINIA TECHNICAL GUIDE
NOTICE 450-15-425**

October 1, 2014

Subject: VIRGINIA FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE-SECTION IV – Virginia Conservation Practice Standards

Purpose: To transmit new and/or revised Virginia Conservation Practice Standards, associated Job Sheets and Statement of Works. Customer Service Toolkit practice narratives have also been updated.

Effective Date: October 1, 2014

Filing Instructions: The new and/or revised Conservation Practice Standards and associated documents can be accessed electronically in Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) at the following link: <http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov>. If you maintain hard copies, replace the old standards and associated documents with the updated standards and associated documents in Section IV of the FOTG.

In order for the new Toolkit narrative to be uploaded, you will need to reload domain data in Toolkit. Once you open the toolkit application, under “File” click on “Reload Domain Data.” This may take several minutes while the domain data is reloading. Click “ok” when the domain data refresh is complete. You will then need to restart Toolkit.

All new or revised Ecological Science Division (ESD) job sheets will be loaded to each Service Center F drive under geodata\aaa\Virginia_Job_Sheets. This will allow the planner to easily access all the job sheets in one location without having to go to the eFOTG. We are currently working on removing the old job sheets and posting the new job sheets and will let you know within the next week when this is complete.

Explanation of Changes:

- All ESD Conservation Practice Standards now include the statement “Use this practice job sheet to plan and certify this practice” within the plans and specifications section of the practice standard. This statement in the standard requires the practice job sheet to be completed in order to plan and certify the practice.
- Some forestry related job sheets were revised to include a forestry plan and map under the practice specifications.

The following are revised ESD Conservation Practice Standards along with revised Job Sheets and Statement of Works.

Contour Farming (Code 330) - The agency revised the definition to emphasize proper alignments and revised the general criteria for maximum row grade to 4 percent based on RUSLE2 technology. The minimum criteria for achieving this standard are not substantively changed from the previous Virginia version of this Standard.

Critical Area Planting (Code 342) – The agency deleted the purpose to rehabilitate and re-vegetate degraded sites that cannot be stabilized using normal establishment techniques as this purpose is implied in other purposes.

Deep Tillage (Code 324) - The agency deleted the purpose to reduce concentration of soil contaminants that inhibit plant growth because there is no technology to describe the level of neither contamination nor a dilution factor. The minimum criteria for achieving this standard are not substantively changed from the previous Virginia version of this Standard.

Mulching (Code 484) – The agency deleted the purposes to moderate soil temperature and suppress weeds as these do not address a resource concern and revised the “Condition where practice applies” to remove this practice from being used for weed control for production agriculture.

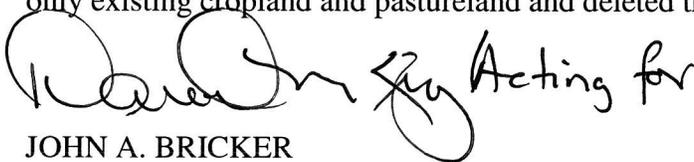
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (Code 329) – The agency changed the practice name to “Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till.” The new standard is significantly more restrictive than previous Virginia versions of the standard. The only pre- or post-planting soil disturbance allowed is one pass with a no-till planter or drill. Additional forms of soil disturbance including a separate strip-till pass or post-planting row cultivation are not allowed. The maximum STIR value allowed for each no-till crop has been reduced to 20. Minimum residue requirements are similar to those found in the previous Virginia version of this standard.

Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (Code 345) – The agency changed the practice name from “Mulch Till” to “Reduced Till.” The new standard now includes two categories of reduced till methods, including methods that previously fell under the 329 practice. Reduced Till (Strip till or ST) allows no full width tillage (tillage in strips or slots only), a maximum STIR value of 40 for each crop, and multiple passes with soil disturbing equipment, including pre-plant strip-till and post-plant row cultivation. Reduced Till (Mulch till or MT) allows non-inversion full width tillage and a maximum STIR value of 80 for each crop. In all cases, inversion tillage (i.e., moldboard plows and similar tools) is not allowed under this Standard. Minimum residue requirements are similar to those found in the previous Virginia version of this standard.

Stripcropping (Code 585) – The agency revised the definition to stress alternating strips of erosion susceptible crops and revised the wind erosion purpose to reduce wind erosion and associated transport of sediment and other wind borne contaminants. The minimum criteria for achieving this standard are not substantively changed from the previous Virginia version of this Standard.

Filter Strip (Code 393) – The agency added a few additional considerations for species selection for native plant communities and organic operation considerations.

Field Border (Code 386) – The agency revised the condition where the practice applies to cover only existing cropland and pastureland and deleted the purpose to manage pest populations.



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