

**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 need, 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.

Unless the practice purpose is to exclude wildlife (such as a windbreak), this practice must be designed to be wildlife friendly consistent with Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Habitat Extension Bulletin No. 53. Although referenced in Bulletin No. 53, WYDOT fence Types E, G, and C are not regarded as wildlife friendly.

In order to comply with Governor's Executive Order 2011-5, all fences located within the high collision risk areas (collision

class 2), as identified by the 2012_sg_fence_collision GIS layer shall be marked, unless approved by the SRC. Areas within 0.6 miles of other sage-grouse concentration areas (i.e. leks identified since 2007, important winter habitat, brood habitat, etc.) will also need to be marked. If needed, fence marking should be contracted separately under practice 734, Fish and Wildlife Structure.

Planned designs departing from available NRCS specifications will be developed on a case-by-case basis and submitted to the State Resource Conservationist (SRC) as a variance for approval prior to installation.

Planned fence *designs* referenced in the 1988 "Fences" handbook are acceptable provided they meet wildlife friendly criteria and the SRC is notified prior to installation.

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

CONSIDERATIONS

The fence design and location should consider: topography, soil properties, livestock management and safety, livestock trailing, wildlife class and movement, location and adequacy of water facilities, development of potential grazing systems, human access and safety, landscape aesthetics, erosion problems, 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.

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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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.

Additional Considerations for Plants:

Where applicable, consider the use of snow fence to accumulate moisture and retard wind desiccation for new plantings, especially windbreaks.

Snow fence designs have not proven successful for control of livestock or big game. When both of these objectives need to be met, a snow fence should be combined with another fence designed for that purpose.

Separate rangeland from introduced or domesticated perennial or annual pastures to control selectivity by grazing animals.

Plan cross fencing of pastures based off similar forage production to facilitate "Prescribed Grazing".

Use fencing to control access to watering sites and utilize water sources as a tool to facilitate rotational grazing, improve grazing distribution and provide for proper forage utilization levels.

Additional Considerations for Livestock:

Reduce livestock deaths resulting from lightning by installing circuit breakers or grounding all wires at 100 to 200 feet intervals. Grounding can be accomplished by using steel posts or strapping pipe alongside the wooden posts. Fence wires should be securely fastened for grounding to the posts or pipes with galvanized wire ties.

Enclose stock water ponds with fence and provide offsite water to improve water quality for livestock. Minimize wildlife (i.e. bird and bat) collisions with wire by leaving a 100' buffer between the fence and water edge.

Control livestock access to known poisonous plant area, especially during the time of year when the plant is most dangerous to livestock health.

Additional Considerations for Wildlife:

In instances where the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Habitat Extension Bulletin No. 53

provides alternative construction specifications, select the alternative most friendly to the target species and compatible with other uses.

Leave gates open when the managed area is not in use.

Control livestock access to important wildlife habitat areas.

Where a water trough is bisected by a fence, minimize wildlife and wire collisions by using a board or other visible material to connect fence line instead of wire.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Fence construction shall be in accordance with Wyoming NRCS Conservation Practice Standard and Specifications

Plans at a minimum will include:

- Map with fence location and field numbers
- Length of fence and how determined
- Type of fence, including detailed construction specifications
- Date and signature
- Date practice applied

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Regular inspection of fences should be part of an ongoing maintenance program. Inspection of fences after storms and other disturbance events is necessary to insure the continued proper function of the fence. Maintenance and repairs will be performed in a timely manner as needed, including tree/limb removal and water gap replacement.

Fence reaches observed to receive sage-grouse strikes should be marked or relocated.

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

REFERENCES

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