

## Description and Purpose

A sediment trap is a containment area where sediment-laden runoff is temporarily detained under quiescent conditions, allowing sediment to settle out or before the runoff is discharged. Sediment traps are formed by excavating or constructing an earthen embankment across a waterway or low drainage area.

## Suitable Applications

Sediment traps should be considered for use:

- At the perimeter of the site at locations where sediment-laden runoff is discharged offsite.
- At multiple locations within the project site where sediment control is needed.
- Around or upslope from storm drain inlet protection measures.
- Sediment traps may be used on construction projects where the drainage area is less than 5 acres. Traps would be placed where sediment-laden stormwater may enter a storm drain or watercourse. SE-2, Sediment Basins, must be used for drainage areas greater than 5 acres.
- As a supplemental control, sediment traps provide additional protection for a water body or for reducing sediment before it enters a drainage system.

## Categories

EC	Erosion Control	
SE	Sediment Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
TC	Tracking Control	
WE	Wind Erosion Control	
NS	Non-Stormwater Management Control	
WM	Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control	

## Legend:

- Primary Objective
- Secondary Objective

## Targeted Constituents

Sediment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nutrients	
Trash	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Metals	
Bacteria	
Oil and Grease	
Organics	

## Potential Alternatives

SE-2 Sediment Basin (for larger areas)



## Limitations

- Requires large surface areas to permit infiltration and settling of sediment.
- Not appropriate for drainage areas greater than 5 acres.
- Only removes large and medium sized particles and requires upstream erosion control.
- Attractive and dangerous to children, requiring protective fencing.
- Conducive to vector production.
- Should not be located in live streams.

## Implementation

### *Design*

A sediment trap is a small temporary ponding area, usually with a gravel outlet, formed by excavation or by construction of an earthen embankment. Its purpose is to collect and store sediment from sites cleared or graded during construction. It is intended for use on small drainage areas with no unusual drainage features and projected for a quick build-out time. It should help in removing coarse sediment from runoff. The trap is a temporary measure with a design life of approximately six months to one year and is to be maintained until the site area is permanently protected against erosion by vegetation and/or structures.

Sediment traps should be used only for small drainage areas. If the contributing drainage area is greater than 5 acres, refer to SE-2, Sediment Basins, or subdivide the catchment area into smaller drainage basins.

Sediment usually must be removed from the trap after each rainfall event. The SWPPP should detail how this sediment is to be disposed of, such as in fill areas onsite, or removal to an approved offsite dump. Sediment traps used as perimeter controls should be installed before any land disturbance takes place in the drainage area.

Sediment traps are usually small enough that a failure of the structure would not result in a loss of life, damage to home or buildings, or interruption in the use of public roads or utilities. However, sediment traps are attractive to children and can be dangerous. The following recommendations should be implemented to reduce risks:

- Install continuous fencing around the sediment trap or pond. Consult local ordinances regarding requirements for maintaining health and safety.
- Restrict basin side slopes to 3:1 or flatter.

Sediment trap size depends on the type of soil, size of the drainage area, and desired sediment removal efficiency (see SE-2, Sediment Basin). As a rule of thumb, the larger the basin volume the greater the sediment removal efficiency. Sizing criteria are typically established under the local grading ordinance or equivalent. The runoff volume from a 2-year storm is a common design criteria for a sediment trap. The sizing criteria below assume that this runoff volume is 0.042 acre-ft/acre (0.5 in. of runoff). While the climatic, topographic, and soil type extremes make it difficult to establish a statewide standard, the following criteria should trap moderate to high amounts of sediment in most areas of California:

- Locate sediment traps as near as practical to areas producing the sediment.
- Trap should be situated according to the following criteria: (1) by excavating a suitable area or where a low embankment can be constructed across a swale, (2) where failure would not cause loss of life or property damage, and (3) to provide access for maintenance, including sediment removal and sediment stockpiling in a protected area.
- Trap should be sized to accommodate a settling zone and sediment storage zone with recommended minimum volumes of 67 yd<sup>3</sup>/acre and 33 yd<sup>3</sup>/acre of contributing drainage area, respectively, based on 0.5 in. of runoff volume over a 24-hour period. In many cases, the size of an individual trap is limited by available space. Multiple traps or additional volume may be required to accommodate specific rainfall, soil, and site conditions.
- Traps with an impounding levee greater than 4.5 ft tall, measured from the lowest point to the impounding area to the highest point of the levee, and traps capable of impounding more than 35,000 ft<sup>3</sup>, should be designed by a Registered Civil Engineer. The design should include maintenance requirements, including sediment and vegetation removal, to ensure continuous function of the trap outlet and bypass structures.
- The outlet pipe or open spillway must be designed to convey anticipated peak flows.
- Use rock or vegetation to protect the trap outlets against erosion.
- Fencing should be provided to prevent unauthorized entry.

## ***Installation***

Sediment traps can be constructed by excavating a depression in the ground or creating an impoundment with a small embankment. Sediment traps should be installed outside the area being graded and should be built prior to the start of the grading activities or removal of vegetation. To minimize the area disturbed by them, sediment traps should be installed in natural depressions or in small swales or drainage ways. The following steps must be followed during installation:

- The area under the embankment must be cleared, grubbed, and stripped of any vegetation and root mat. The pool area should be cleared.
- The fill material for the embankment must be free of roots or other woody vegetation as well as oversized stones, rocks, organic material, or other objectionable material. The embankment may be compacted by traversing with equipment while it is being constructed.
- All cut-and-fill slopes should be 3:1 or flatter.
- When a riser is used, all pipe joints must be watertight.
- When a riser is used, at least the top two-thirds of the riser should be perforated with 0.5 in. diameter holes spaced 8 in. vertically and 10 to 12 in. horizontally. See SE-2, Sediment Basin.
- When an earth or stone outlet is used, the outlet crest elevation should be at least 1 ft below the top of the embankment.

- When crushed stone outlet is used, the crushed stone used in the outlet should meet AASHTO M43, size No. 2 or 24, or its equivalent such as MSHA No. 2. Gravel meeting the above gradation may be used if crushed stone is not available.

## Costs

Average annual cost per installation and maintenance (18 month useful life) is \$0.73 per ft<sup>3</sup> (\$1,300 per drainage acre). Maintenance costs are approximately 20% of installation costs.

## Inspection and Maintenance

- Inspect BMPs prior to forecast rain, daily during extended rain events, after rain events, weekly during the rainy season, and at two-week intervals during the non-rainy season.
- Inspect outlet area for erosion and stabilize if required.
- Inspect trap banks for seepage and structural soundness, repair as needed.
- Inspect outlet structure and spillway for any damage or obstructions. Repair damage and remove obstructions as needed.
- Inspect fencing for damage and repair as needed.
- Inspect the sediment trap for area of standing water during every visit. Corrective measures should be taken if the BMP does not dewater completely in 72 hours or less to prevent vector production.
- Sediment that accumulates in the BMP must be periodically removed in order to maintain BMP effectiveness. Sediment should be removed when the sediment accumulation reaches one-third of the trap capacity. Sediment removed during maintenance may be incorporated into earthwork on the site or disposed of at an appropriate location.
- Remove vegetation from the sediment trap when first detected to prevent pools of standing water and subsequent vector production.
- BMPs that require dewatering shall be continuously attended while dewatering takes place. Dewatering BMPs shall be implemented at all times during dewatering activities.

## References

Brown, W., and T. Schueler. *The Economics of Stormwater BMPs in the Mid-Atlantic Region*. Prepared for Chesapeake Research Consortium, Edgewater, MD, by the Center for Watershed Protection, Ellicott City, MD, 1997.

Draft – *Sedimentation and Erosion Control, an Inventory of Current Practices*, USEPA, April 1990.

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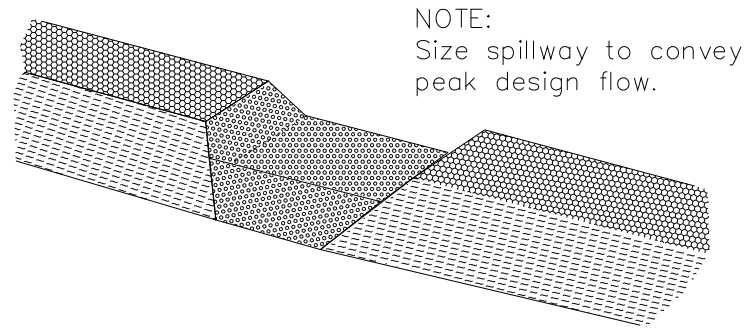
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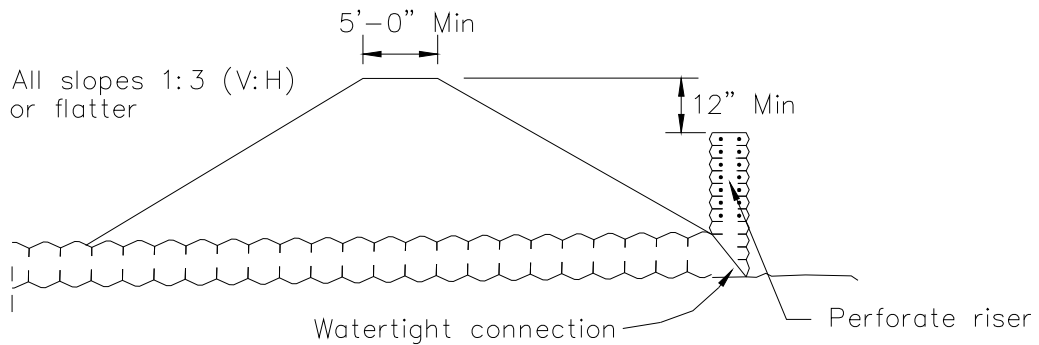
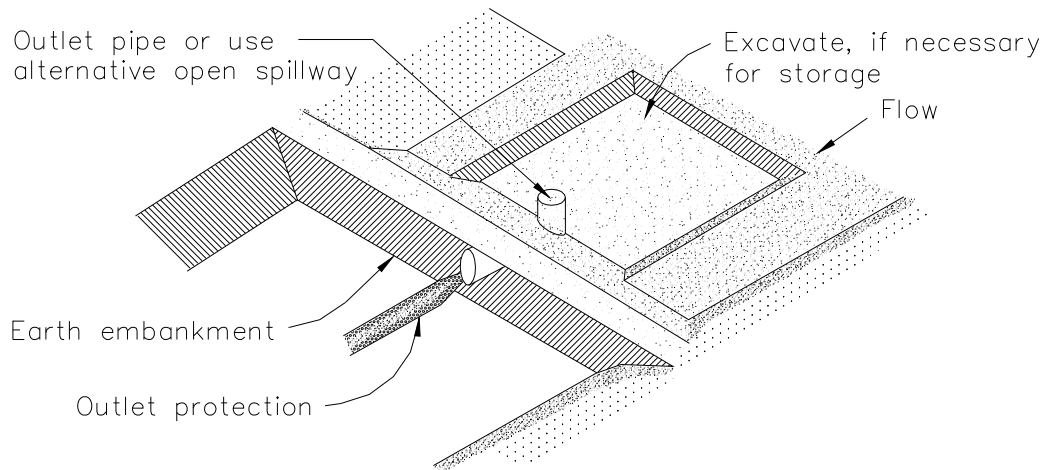
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NOTE:  
Size spillway to convey  
peak design flow.

TYPICAL OPEN SPILLWAY



EMBANKMENT SECTION THRU RISER

TYPICAL SEDIMENT TRAP  
NOT TO SCALE