

Erosion and Sediment Control

Control Stormwater Pollution

Fact Sheet 2

Your Building Site

Queensland Environmental Law ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1994

All Queenslanders have a legal duty under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* to take all reasonable and practicable measures to minimise or prevent environmental harm. Such harm can be caused if sediment from building sites enters stormwater drains or waterways.

In addition, people who are concerned with management in a corporation have an additional duty under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* to ensure their corporation complies with the Act. This means supervisors need to take reasonable and practicable steps to ensure that the people under their control do not breach environmental laws.

People who become aware of environmental harm in association with their work (eg. loss of sediment from their site into a watercourse) have a legal duty under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* to notify their employer. The employer must then rectify the problem, or risk prosecution or fines.

The *Environmental Protection Act 1994* provides for specific offences relating to the deposit and/or release or potential release of sediment or building wastes to stormwater drains, roadside gutters and Queensland waters (e.g. creeks and waterways). Builder's waste has the potential to be released into stormwater drains and is governed by these laws.

THE SUSTAINABLE PLANNING ACT 2009

The *Sustainable Planning Act 2009 (SPA)* is the mechanism for assessing all developments within Queensland. This Act establishes the process for integrated planning and development assessment in an ecologically sustainable way. Under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* it is a serious offence to breach development conditions such as conditions dealing with erosion and sediment control or stormwater quality.

Other Approvals

Councils in Queensland vary in their approval requirements. Contact your local Council for further information on which approvals are required.

Further Details:

Whitsunday Regional Council

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These fact sheets are based on those produced by the South East

Queensland Healthy Waterways Partnership



Council officer discussing erosion and sediment control problems on-site

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The Whitsunday Regional Council has developed this erosion and sediment control fact sheet to assist in its goal to protect, enhance and promote its natural assets. Soil erosion, sediment and litter from building sites can be major sources of stormwater pollution and can cause significant harm to our sensitive marine environments like the Great Barrier Reef.

Impacts of Stormwater Pollution

Stormwater contains many pollutants which can enter our local creeks, rivers and marine systems, causing harm to native animals, plants, fish breeding habitats and recreational areas. Soil erosion, sediment and litter from building sites can be major sources of stormwater pollution and can cause:

- Significant harm to the environment eg. loss of valuable seagrass habitat for marine creatures.
- Weed infestation of waterways caused by sediment settling on the creek beds and transporting nutrients
- Loss of valuable topsoil.
- Significant public safety problems when washed onto roads and intersections.
- Blocked drains creating flooding and increased maintenance costs to the community.
- Damage to recreational fishing and the seafood industry.



Stormwater is not Wastewater

Stormwater is not wastewater. Stormwater flows untreated into the waterways that provide vital habitats for animals and plants. It is your responsibility to help keep stormwater pollution-free.

Erosion and Sediment Control on Building Sites

Soil erosion on building sites can be a major source of sediment pollution in our waterways. A single building block can lose up to four truckloads of soil in one storm. Sediment washed from building sites into gutters and stormwater drains, can cause flooding and affects the water quality and fish stocks in our freshwater and marine environments.

Effective onsite erosion and sediment control provides many benefits:



Effective on-site erosion and sediment control

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| • All- weather site access | • better public image |
| • improved wet weather working conditions | • better looking, more marketable sites |
| • improved drainage and reduced site wetness | • fewer public complaints |
| • less mud and dust problems | • reduced risk of fines |
| • reduced stockpile losses | • better fishing for everyone |
| • reduced cleanup costs | • cleaner waterways. |

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Stormwater pollution prevention – it's up to you!

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE EROSION AND PREVENT SEDIMENT FROM LEAVING YOUR SITE.

The following site management practices will minimise soil erosion and sediment runoff from your building site.

MINIMISE DISTURBANCE WHEN EXCAVATING

Preserve as much grassed area as possible. These areas not only improve the appearance of your site, they also reduce soil erosion and filter much of the sediment from stormwater run-off before it reaches the drainage system.

CATCH DRAINS AND PERIMETER BANKS

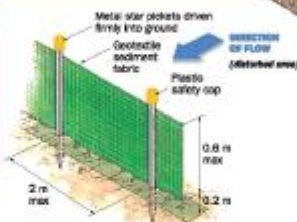
Where possible, allow for diversion of up-slope stormwater around the work site and other disturbed surfaces.

CONCRETE WASTE AND WASHING

Waste concrete and household paint must not be allowed to wash into the gutters or the street.

INSTALL A SEDIMENT BARRIER

Sediment barriers down-slope of the building site trap coarse sediment before it can wash into gutters, drains and waterways. Sediment barriers can be made from geotextile sediment fabric attached to posts with the geotextile buried in an up-slope trench.



ENTRY/EXIT POINT (RUMBLE PAD)

Restrict vehicle access to one entry/exit point where possible. Stabilising the access with rock will allow all weather access and will reduce the amount of soil carried off the site by vehicles.

EARLY STORMWATER DRAINAGE CONNECTION

Connect temporary or permanent downpipe/s to the underground stormwater system immediately after the roof is laid – or slow and spread the flow from downpipes to avoid localised erosion. Downpipes may be temporarily removed during wall construction. All stormwater should discharge in a manner that does not cause soil erosion.

SAND AND SOIL STOCKPILES

Stockpiles should be placed wholly on the construction site and behind a sediment barrier.



Penalties

Breaches of the legislation may result in:

- Direction Notice issued under the Environmental Protection Act 1994, or on-the-spot fines of up to \$8,835.
- Prosecutions under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 (SPA) or the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (i.e. fines of thousands of dollars or prison sentences for serious offences).

Who can be fined on a building site?

Anyone who does not comply with the duties mentioned above can be prosecuted or issued with on-the-spot fines. Companies, builders, subcontractors and individual workers can all be fined.