

The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Bulletin is prepared by the Storm Water Compliance Review Task Force to aid all projects and operations in maintaining compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements.

Storm Water Discharges...



Protection of Soil Disturbed Areas

Soil stabilization practices are designed to prevent erosion through the preservation of soils in place. Sediment control practices are designed to reduce sediment in runoff.

In the past, field practices were commonly based on the idea that, "as long as sand bags, silt fences, and straw bales are in place, we are doing our job." But the regulatory community has determined this approach to be insufficient.

Federal Guidelines state that "stabilization of exposed and denuded soils is one of the

most important factors in minimizing erosion while construction activities occur." While not emphasized in the past, the general permit requirements for soil stabilization "on all disturbed areas during the rainy season" will be strictly enforced this winter season.

Caltrans intends to continue enforcing the requirements of the General and Regional permits, and, in fact, will be stepping up enforcement activities to ensure compliance.

SOIL STABILIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Key provisions in Caltrans Storm Water Quality Handbooks (May 1996 with addenda) state the following requirements for soil stabilization during the winter season:

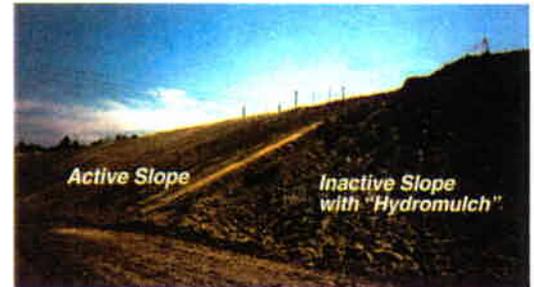
- *Non-active construction areas that have the potential to erode due to previous construction activities shall be fully protected.*
- *Active, soil-disturbed construction locations shall be fully protected with both soil stabilization and sediment control practices at the end of each working day, unless fair weather is predicted.*

This means that all non-active areas must be protected as soon as possible. Caltrans recommends that areas projected to remain inactive for 20 or more days be stabilized within 10 days of becoming inactive. (This recommendation is a requirement in the proposed revisions to the SSPs.)

If fair weather is not predicted for the following day, all active and non-active areas must be protected by the end of the current day.

MINIMIZATION OF IMPACTS

How can you minimize the impacts to your construction project? Here are some suggestions:



- 1) Minimize disturbed areas and reduce time of exposure. i.e. clear and grub only those areas that will be worked on in the near future.
- 2) Read up on the following BMP's in the handbook to determine which stabilization practices are most appropriate for your site:
 - **CD23** - Preservation of existing vegetation
 - **CD24B** - Temporary seeding and planting
 - **CD25** - Mulching
 - **CD26A** - Soil stabilizers
 - **CD26B** - Geotextiles, mats/plastic covers and erosion control blankets
 - **CD30** - Sodding, grass plugging, and vegetative buffer strips
- 3) Have ongoing discussions with contractor regarding BMP implementation preparedness.

Additional information is available in the Caltrans Storm Water Quality Handbooks. Questions or comments may be directed to:

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