

**CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & COMPLIANCE**

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(For assistance, please contact EHS at (402) 472-4925, or visit our web site at <http://ehs.unl.edu/>)

**Introduction**

Construction activities can have an assortment of various environmental regulatory implications. Depending on the regulation, one or more agencies can have regulatory authority. For example, temporary or permanent storage of fuel at a construction site can trigger as many as five different sets of regulations that are administered by three different agencies (Nebraska State Fire Marshal (SFM), Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), and Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD)).

The purpose of this SOP is to highlight those construction-related activities that can have implications pursuant to environmental protection regulations and which should trigger consultation with EHS early in the planning process.

**Water Quality Considerations**

If the project involves:

- Disturbing greater than 1 acre of land, then a “General NPDES Permit Authorizing Storm Water Discharges from Construction Sites to Waters of the State of Nebraska” must be obtained prior to land disturbance. See EHS SOP, **Construction Site NPDES Permits**.
- Disturbing less than one-acre of land, then feasible Best Management Practices must be implemented to minimize the potential for sediment and pollutant loading to nearby waters. See Appendix A.
- De-watering of the site, then a ‘General NPDES Permit Authorizing Dewatering Discharges’ must be obtained from NDEQ. See EHS SOP, **Construction Site NPDES Permits**.
- Installation or modification of a livestock operation (including fisheries), an onsite inspection prior to any work done will be required by NDEQ.
- Installation of new foundation drains, it will be necessary to amend UNL’s foundation drain discharge permit.
- Installation of a cooling tower, a discharge permit must be obtained from NDEQ unless the discharge is to the sanitary sewer.
- Installation of fountains, swimming pools and spas, a discharge permit will be required from NDEQ unless discharge is to the sanitary sewer.
- Installation of an open loop geothermal heat pump, NDEQ permitting will be required.

- Construction or maintenance on a well where hydrostatic testing is conducted, a discharge permit must be obtained from NDEQ.
- Construction of septic systems, french drains, or leach fields, NDEQ permitting will be required.
- Installation of potable water supply treatment facilities, NDEQ permitting will be required.
- Commercial cleaning of the exterior of buildings or other structures, NDEQ permitting will apply if there are discharges.
- Construction, demolition, dredging or filling on ponds, lakes, reservoirs, streams or wetlands, Army Corps of Engineers permitting may be required.
- Installing fuel tanks or other tanks containing oil (including but not limited to petroleum based, animal, nut, and vegetable fats, oils, and greases, milk and milk products and ethanol by-products), may require installation permits as well as compliance with Oil Pollution Prevention regulatory requirements.
- Installing Oil-water separators, NDEQ permitting will apply unless the discharge is to the sanitary sewer.

### **Air Quality Considerations**

- If the project involves the installation or moving of a generator, a permit must be obtained from LLCHD. Notify EHS before conducting any installation related work.
- If the project involves the installation of any type of aboveground or buried tank, an installation permit from the SFM is required. This includes tanks that are associated with generators.
- If the project involves the installation of fuel-burning boilers, kilns, incinerators, or cooling towers, etc., UNL may be required to seek a construction permit and amend existing air operating permits.
- If the project involves demolition of a structure, it will be necessary to file an asbestos NESHAPS notification with NDEQ and LLCHD, regardless of whether asbestos is present (Nebraska Title 129). If the project involves removal of 260 linear feet, 160 square feet or 35 cubic feet of regulated asbestos-containing material (RACM), a NESHAP notification must be filed in addition to any notification of a regulated asbestos project that is made to the Nebraska Health Department.
  - It will be necessary to conduct an asbestos survey prior to any renovation or remodeling project that may disturb asbestos containing building materials (ACM) or presumed asbestos containing materials (PACM). Any activity that will disturb ACM or PACM must be conducted by a licensed asbestos firm. Asbestos projects are subject to the prior notification provisions of Nebraska Title 178, Asbestos Control Regulations. For more information concerning building materials that may contain asbestos, complete the on-line EHS Asbestos Awareness training module. EHS administers the program for compliance with Title 129. Facilities Management and Planning administers the program for compliance with Title 178.

- If the project involves the installation or removal of refrigeration equipment that contains greater than 50-pounds at full-charge, then EPA ozone protection regulations may be triggered.

### **Waste Disposal Considerations**

- If the project will involve disposal of contaminated soils, a disposal permit will be required.
- Fluorescent lamps and ballasts, mercury-containing thermostats and switches, tritium exit lamps, smoke detectors, and PCB-contaminated items, and asbestos containing materials require specific disposal arrangements and permits. EHS must be involved in the process.
- Aerosol cans, paints, thinners, strippers, degreasers, and other chemical wastes generated in the process require specific management and disposal must be coordinated through EHS.

See the EHS SOP, ***Management of Construction and Demolition Waste*** for additional waste considerations and guidance.

## Appendix A

### Common Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMPs)

The following table, adapted from information provided by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, includes a list of some commonly used construction site BMPs. Not all BMPs will be used at all sites, and not all potential BMPs appropriate for a given site appear in the list. This list is intended to enhance awareness of items/conditions that could, if not adequately protected/maintained, lead to adverse environmental impacts and/or compliance issues. This table forms the basis for EHS inspections of construction sites.

<b>General refuse and construction/demolition waste</b>	
Designate trash and bulk waste-collection areas on-site.	Clean up litter and debris from the construction site every day.
Recycle materials whenever possible (e.g., paper, wood, concrete, metal, and oil).	Locate waste-collection areas away from streets, gutters, watercourses, and storm drains. Waste-collection areas (dumpsters and such) are often best located near construction site entrances to minimize traffic on disturbed soils. Consider secondary containment around waste collection areas to further minimize the likelihood of contaminated discharges.
<b>Sanitary and septic waste</b>	
Provide restroom facilities on-site.	Maintain clean restroom facilities and empty porta-johns regularly (must be pumped by a licensed hauler, not discharged to the site).
Provide secondary containment pans under porta-johns, where possible.	Provide tie-downs or stake downs for porta-johns in areas of high winds
<b>Hazardous and special wastes and materials</b>	
Segregate and designate hazardous materials (i.e., paint, adhesives, etc.) and waste storage areas. Consult with EHS prior to generating hazardous waste on-site.	Provide for secondary containment of all hazardous materials and wastes stored on-site. Arrange for off-site transport and treatment of hazardous wastes at a licensed facility and only in coordination/consultation with EHS.
Inspect all containers of hazardous waste at least weekly to ensure container integrity.	Label all containers with appropriate descriptive wording to describe the contents. Keep containers securely closed.
<b>Fueling and fleet/construction vehicles</b>	
All fuel storage tanks stored on-site must have secondary containment (either integral or external to the AST). They may also require a permit.	Vehicles should be regularly inspected for leakage of fluids and promptly repaired. Spilled or leaked material and contaminated soils should be containerized for proper off-site disposal.
Report releases of hazardous substances, including oils, fuels, greases, lubricants, chemicals, etc. to EHS.	Maintain appropriately sized and equipped spill kits on site.
Use vehicles and equipment in a manner that prevents damage to erosion and sediment control devices.	
<b>Construction site entrances and roads</b>	
Identify, clearly mark, and implement stabilizing measures at one or two locations where vehicles will enter and exit the site.	Stabilize temporary roads by paving, and/or placement of large crushed rock, stone pads, or concrete.
If wash down or hose systems are used to remove mud from construction vehicles, divert run-off to a sediment trap.	As necessary, clean/sweep streets near the construction zone.
Ensure that the exit is at least 50 feet long (generally, the length of two dump trucks) and graded so runoff does not enter the adjacent street.	Replenish or replace aggregate if it becomes clogged with sediment.
<b>Diversion ditches or berms</b>	
Divert run-on and run-off away from disturbed areas.	Ensure that the diversion is protected from erosion, using vegetation, geotextiles, or other appropriate BMPs.

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Divert sediment-laden water to a sediment-trapping structure.	Inspect diversions and berms, including any outlets, regularly and after each rainfall.
Remove accumulated sediment.	
<b>Temporary seeding</b>	
Seed and mulch area (the mulch provides temporary erosion protection by protecting the soil surface, moderating temperature, and retaining moisture while seeds germinate and grow).	Water regularly, if needed, to ensure quick growth.
Maintain backup BMPs, such as silt fence or settling ponds.	
<b>Slope protection</b>	
Use rolled erosion-control products on slopes steeper than 3 to 1 (horizontal to vertical) and in swales or long channels.	Trench the top of the blanket in to prevent run-off from flowing under the blanket.
Overlap the lower end of the top mat over the top of the downslope mat to ensure that run-off stays on top of the blankets and mats.	Install silt fence or fiber rolls to help control erosion on moderate slopes and install on level contours spaced at 10- to 20-foot intervals.
Staple blankets and mats according to specifications.	Periodically inspect for signs of erosion or failure, and repair as necessary. Continue inspecting until vegetation is established.
<b>Storm drain inlet protection</b>	
Storm drain inlet protection should be used not only for storm drains within the active construction project, but also for storm drains outside the project area that might receive storm water discharges from the project.	Install inlet protection as soon as storm drain inlets are installed and before land disturbance activities begin in areas with existing storm drain systems.
Design inlet protection to handle the volume of water from the area being drained.	Use in conjunction with other erosion prevention and sediment control BMPs— remember, inlet protection is a secondary BMP!
Inspect inlets frequently and after each rainfall. Remove accumulated sediment from around the device and check and remove any sediment that might have entered the inlet.	Replace or repair the inlet protection if it becomes damaged.
<b>Perimeter control- Silt fences</b>	
Install on the downslope perimeter of the project (it is often unnecessary to surround the entire site with silt fence). Sediment barriers can be used.	Use silt fence or fiber rolls to protect stream buffers, riparian areas, wetlands, or other waterways. Don't install in ditches, channels, or other areas of concentrated flow.
Trench in the silt fence on the uphill side (6 inches deep by 6 inches wide).	Install stakes on the downhill side of the fence or roll.
Curve the end of the silt fence or fiber roll up-gradient to help it contain run-off.	Do not install by running up and down a slope or hill.
Do not use silt fence or fiber rolls alone in areas that drain more than ¼ acre per 100 feet of fence.	Replace the silt fence or roll where it is worn, torn, or otherwise damaged.
Remove sediment when it reaches 1/3 of the height of the fence or ½ the height of the fiber roll.	Retrench or replace any silt fence or roll that is not properly anchored to the ground.
<b>Sediment traps or basins</b>	
Use a sediment basin for common drainage locations that serve an area with 10 or more acres disturbed at any one time.	Design to provide storage for the volume of run-off from the drainage area for at least a 2-year, 24-hour storm (or 3,600 cubic feet of storage per acre drained, which is enough to contain 1 inch of runoff, if the 2-year, 24-hour calculation has not been performed).
Locate at low-lying areas of the site and on the down-gradient side of bare soil areas where flows converge. Do not put sediment traps or basins in or immediately adjacent to flowing streams or other waterways.	Where a large sediment basin is not practical, use smaller sediment basins or sediment traps (or both).
<b>Dewatering</b>	
Obtain a dewatering permit if storm water is or will be pumped from any part of the site.	Never discharge muddy water into storm drains, streams, lakes, or wetlands unless the sediment has been removed before discharge.

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<p>Pump muddy water from excavated areas to a temporary or permanent sedimentation basin or to an area completely enclosed by silt fence in a flat vegetated area where discharges can infiltrate into the ground.</p>	
<p><b>Stockpiles</b></p>	
<p>Temporary stockpiles must be seeded, covered, or surrounded by properly installed silt fence, or have other controls in place to ensure material does not migrate from the designated stockpile area.</p>	<p>Stockpiles should never be placed on paved surfaces. Storage piles should not be placed in close proximity or up-slope from storm sewer inlets.</p>