

PREVENT POLLUTION FROM RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SITES

Best Practice Guidelines

The adoption of appropriate pollution controls during construction is important not only to the environment but also the developer/builder. A development without adequate pollution controls increases costs e.g. replacement of washed away stockpiles, clean up costs, fines and loss of business reputation.

EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL

Without erosion and sediment protection measures, large amounts of soil can be lost from a building site and enter the stormwater system. The stormwater system drains directly into our waterways.

Sediment in our waterways pollutes our creeks, lakes and rivers and has a major impact on water quality, aquatic plants and animals.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

It is the **responsibility of the developer/builder** to ensure that pollution control measures are in place before work commences and are adequately maintained throughout construction.

The developer/builder must ensure all workers (including subcontractors, delivery drivers, etc) are aware of their responsibilities to minimise pollution.

A series of six information sheets outlining best practice guidelines to prevent pollution from residential building sites has been developed by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The information provided is based on a typical building site in Canberra. It should be noted that some sites may need more control measures in place depending on slope or other characteristics specific to the site. Controls should be in place prior to works commencing.



Bad building practices



Good building practices

The use of business signage placed near sediment controls can help promote your business as environmentally aware to potential customers. You can also win peak industry awards for best environmental practice by implementing environment protection controls resulting in wide promotion of your business.

Prevent Pollution from Residential Building Sites

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

It is essential that regular maintenance be undertaken of sediment controls to ensure compliance with the *Environment Protection Act 1997*. Inspecting controls at the end of each day throughout construction will help anticipate potential problems, and may extend the life of the controls.

(Refer to next page)

SEDIMENT CONTROL BARRIER

1 Geotextile sediment fencing, on its own or incorporating straw bale filters wrapped in biddum material, must be installed along the lowest side/s of the site. Shade cloth is not adequate and is ineffective in controlling sediment. Controls should also be placed to protect any stormwater drains.

(Refer to Information Sheet 3)

DESIGNATED CUTTING AREA AND WASH AREA

2 Ensure all wastewater from brick cutting, concrete works, painting, washing etc. does not enter the stormwater system. Onsite mixing or washing should be carried out in a designated contained area.

(Refer to Information Sheet 6)

STOCKPILES

3 Ensure all building material and waste stockpiles are contained and stored behind the sediment fence. If there is insufficient storage capacity for building materials within the site, you must obtain approval prior to using the nature strip area.

(Refer to Information Sheet 5)

VERGE MANAGEMENT

4 Builders and developers must comply with the approved Landscape Management Protection Plan (LMPP) for their site. The LMPP often requires fencing of the nature strip area to protect existing trees and footpaths. In some instances, approval may be granted for short term use of the nature strip area for storage or access purposes. **Phone Parks, Conservation and Lands on 13 22 81 for more information.**

(Refer to Information Sheet 5)

CATCH DRAINS AND PERIMETER BANKS

5 Divert up-slope water. Where practical, up-slope water should be diverted around the work site, it will help keep the site drier in wet periods. Ensure water is diverted onto stable areas with sediment controls, and not into neighbouring properties. Avoid directing water towards entry/exit points.

(Refer to Information Sheet 2)

MINIMISE DISTURBANCE WHEN EXCAVATING

6 Maintain a grassed area (vegetation buffer) if possible, it will act as a filter for sediment in runoff water and will improve the appearance of the site. Avoid clearing vegetation and excavating until building commences.

(Refer to Information Sheet 2)

STABILISED ACCESS POINT/CROSSOVER

7 All entry/exit points must be consolidated with crushed aggregate (or similar), extending from the road kerb to the building line. This allows all-weather access to your site and reduces the amount of soil carried off the site by vehicles. Stabilised access/crossover should be located as far away from the lowest point as possible. Roads must be kept clean at all times.

(Refer to Information Sheet 4)

TOILET FACILITIES

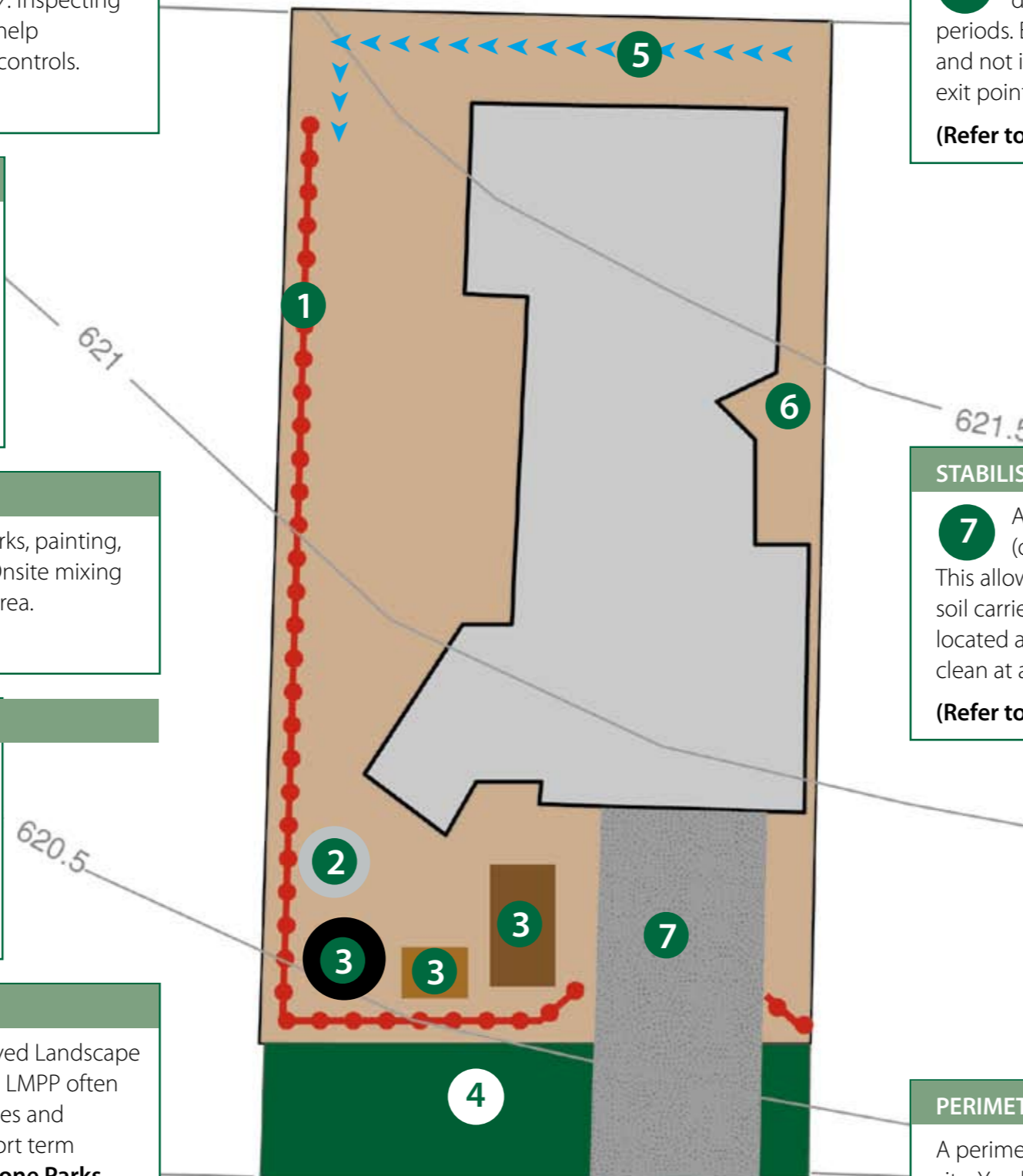
The 'ACT Construction Industries Amenities Code of Practice', states that you must provide access to toilets, or, provide portable toilets. The number of toilets provided should be at a rate of at least one for each 10 persons or fraction of 10 persons.

(Phone Office of Regulatory Services (ORS) WorkCover on 6207 3000 for more information)

PERIMETER FENCE

A perimeter fence can prevent unauthorised persons gaining access to a site. You have a duty of care under the *Work Safety Act 2008* to protect the public as well as workers from hazards associated with building works. It may also assist in protecting the verge.

(Phone ORS WorkCover on 6207 3000 for more information)



NOISE

Ensure all building work that generates noise is conducted within the time periods detailed in the *Environment Protection Act 1997*.

Location	Monday to Saturday	Sunday and Public Holidays
Industrial, City and Town Centre areas	6 am to 8 pm	6 am to 8 pm
Any other area when work is completed within two weeks	7 am to 8 pm	8 am to 8 pm
Any other area when work is not completed within two weeks	7 am to 6 pm	Building work must not exceed Noise Standard*

* For more information regarding Noise Standards refer to Schedule 2 of the Environment Protection Regulation 2005.

AIR QUALITY

Dust

Where building work generates dust, all reasonable and practicable measures must be taken to minimise that dust. This can often be achieved by dampening the ground with a light spray of water. Sites that remain exposed for long periods of time must have dust suppression methods applied. In addition, ensure loads are covered when transporting material. Refer to Dust Suppression for Construction Areas Information Sheet for more information.

Fire

Burning of waste materials on site, such as plastics, chemicals or wood that is painted, chemically treated or contaminated with chemicals is illegal. A fire may be permitted for heating purposes provided it is in a brazier or constructed fireplace. Only seasoned untreated timber can be burnt for heating purposes.

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HOUSING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

MAINTENANCE OF CONTROLS

Regular maintenance of erosion and sediment controls is essential to their success.

- Ensure controls are checked daily and any repairs undertaken immediately.
- With regular maintenance and checks (especially after storm events), sediment fences can last for up to six months.
- A good maintenance program should include ongoing modification throughout the construction process.
- Aggregate may need to be reapplied to the entry/exits points.
- Ensure controls are put back in place if they are moved for any reason. It is important that controls are in place at the end of the day or before it rains.
- Advise all workers commencing work on the site of the importance of maintaining sediment controls and to keep vehicles off the site in wet weather.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Under the *Environment Protection Act 1997*, it is an offence for a person to allow any substance other than rainwater to enter the stormwater system. Contraventions of the Act can lead to an on-the-spot fine of up to \$200 for an individual, or \$1,000 for a company. More serious offences can lead to penalties of up to \$50,000, six months in jail and a criminal record.

In the case of excessive noise, a complaint may be lodged with the EPA. A complaint regarding noise pollution will be considered by the EPA, only if it is made by a person affected by the noise. The EPA will undertake an investigation which may include issuing a warning letter, on-the-spot fine, or depending on the circumstances, an Environment Protection Order (EPO). If the noise continues to be a problem, it is a serious offence and could lead to prosecution in court.

For more information on preventing pollution, refer to the Environment Protection Guidelines for Construction and Land Development in the ACT, August 2007, or contact the Environment Protection Authority by calling Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Department of the Environment,
Climate Change, Energy and Water



For more information
call Canberra Connect 13 22 81 or
visit www.environment.act.gov.au