

BMP C233: Silt Fence

Purpose

Use of a silt fence reduces the transport of coarse sediment from a construction site by providing a temporary physical barrier to sediment and reducing the runoff velocities of overland flow. See Figure 4.19 for details on silt fence construction.

Conditions of Use

Silt fence may be used downslope of all disturbed areas.

- Silt fence is not intended to treat concentrated flows, nor is it intended to treat substantial amounts of overland flow. Any concentrated flows must be conveyed through the drainage system to a sediment pond. The only circumstance in which overland flow can be treated solely by a silt fence, rather than by a sediment pond, is when the area draining to the fence is one acre or less and flow rates are less than 0.5 cfs.
- Silt fences should not be constructed in streams or used in V-shaped ditches. They are not an adequate method of silt control for anything deeper than sheet or overland flow.

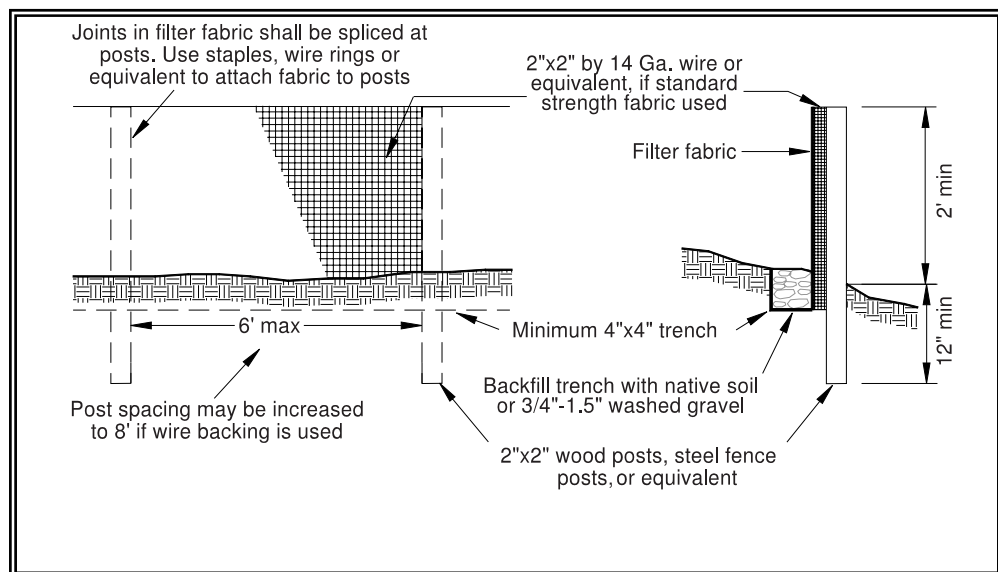


Figure 4.19 – Silt Fence

Design and Installation Specifications

- Drainage area of 1 acre or less or in combination with sediment basin in a larger site.
- Maximum slope steepness (normal (perpendicular) to fence line) 1:1.
- Maximum sheet or overland flow path length to the fence of 100 feet.
- No flows greater than 0.5 cfs.
- The geotextile used shall meet the following standards. All geotextile properties listed below are minimum average roll values (i.e., the test result for any sampled roll in a lot shall meet or exceed the values shown in Table 4.10):

Table 4.10 Geotextile Standards	
Polymeric Mesh AOS (ASTM D4751)	0.60 mm maximum for slit film wovens (#30 sieve). 0.30 mm maximum for all other geotextile types (#50 sieve). 0.15 mm minimum for all fabric types (#100 sieve).
Water Permittivity (ASTM D4491)	0.02 sec ⁻¹ minimum
Grab Tensile Strength (ASTM D4632)	180 lbs. Minimum for extra strength fabric. 100 lbs minimum for standard strength fabric.
Grab Tensile Strength (ASTM D4632)	30% maximum
Ultraviolet Resistance (ASTM D4355)	70% minimum

- Standard strength fabrics shall be supported with wire mesh, chicken wire, 2-inch x 2-inch wire, safety fence, or jute mesh to increase the strength of the fabric. Silt fence materials are available that have synthetic mesh backing attached.
- Filter fabric material shall contain ultraviolet ray inhibitors and stabilizers to provide a minimum of six months of expected usable construction life at a temperature range of 0°F. to 120°F.
- 100 percent biodegradable silt fence is available that is strong, long lasting, and can be left in place after the project is completed, if permitted by local regulations.
- Standard Notes for construction plans and specifications follow. Refer to Figure 4.19 for standard silt fence details.

The contractor shall install and maintain temporary silt fences at the locations shown in the Plans. The silt fences shall be constructed in the areas of clearing, grading, or drainage prior to starting those activities. A silt fence shall not be considered temporary if the silt fence must function beyond the life of the contract. The silt fence shall prevent soil carried by runoff water from going beneath, through, or over the top of the silt fence, but shall allow the water to pass through the fence.

The minimum height of the top of silt fence shall be 2 feet and the maximum height shall be 2½ feet above the original ground surface.

The geotextile shall be sewn together at the point of manufacture, or at an approved location as determined by the Engineer, to form geotextile lengths as required. All sewn seams shall be located at a support post. Alternatively, two sections of silt fence can be overlapped, provided the Contractor can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Engineer, that the overlap is long enough and that the adjacent fence sections are close enough together to prevent silt laden water from escaping through the fence at the overlap.

The geotextile shall be attached on the up-slope side of the posts and support system with staples, wire, or in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. The geotextile shall be attached to the posts in a manner that reduces the potential for geotextile tearing at the staples, wire, or other connection device. Silt fence back-up support for the geotextile in the form of a wire or plastic mesh is dependent on the properties of the geotextile selected for use. If wire or plastic back-up mesh is used, the mesh shall be fastened securely to the up-slope of the posts with the geotextile being up-slope of the mesh back-up support.

The geotextile at the bottom of the fence shall be buried in a trench to a minimum depth of 4 inches below the ground surface. The trench shall be backfilled and the soil tamped in place over the buried portion of the geotextile, such that no flow can pass beneath the fence and scouring can not occur. When wire or polymeric back-up support mesh is used, the wire or polymeric mesh shall extend into the trench a minimum of 3 inches.

The fence posts shall be placed or driven a minimum of 18 inches. A minimum depth of 12 inches is allowed if topsoil or other soft subgrade soil is not present and a minimum depth of 18 inches cannot be reached. Fence post depths shall be increased by 6 inches if the fence is located on slopes of 3:1 or steeper and the slope is perpendicular to the fence. If required post depths cannot be obtained, the posts shall be adequately secured by bracing or guying to prevent overturning of the fence due to sediment loading.

Silt fences shall be located on contour as much as possible, except at the ends of the fence, where the fence shall be turned uphill such that the silt fence captures the runoff water and prevents water from flowing around the end of the fence.

If the fence must cross contours, with the exception of the ends of the fence, gravel check dams placed perpendicular to the back of the fence shall be used to minimize concentrated flow and erosion along the back of the fence. The gravel check dams shall be approximately 1-foot deep at the back of the fence. It shall be continued perpendicular to the fence at the same elevation until the top of the check dam intercepts the ground surface behind the fence. The gravel check dams shall consist of crushed surfacing base course, gravel backfill for walls, or shoulder ballast. The gravel check dams shall be located every 10 feet along the fence where the fence must cross contours. The slope of the fence line where contours must be crossed shall not be steeper than 3:1.

Wood, steel or equivalent posts shall be used. Wood posts shall have minimum dimensions of 2 inches by 2 inches by 3 feet minimum length, and shall be free of defects such as knots, splits, or gouges.

Steel posts shall consist of either size No. 6 rebar or larger, ASTM A 120 steel pipe with a minimum diameter of 1-inch, U, T, L, or C shape steel posts with a minimum weight of 1.35 lbs./ft. or other steel posts having equivalent strength and bending resistance to the post sizes listed. The spacing of the support posts shall be a maximum of 6 feet.

Fence back-up support, if used, shall consist of steel wire with a maximum mesh spacing of 2 inches, or a prefabricated polymeric mesh. The strength of the wire or polymeric mesh shall be equivalent to or greater than 180 lbs. grab tensile strength. The polymeric mesh must be as resistant to ultraviolet radiation as the geotextile it supports.

- Silt fence installation using the slicing method specification details follow. Refer to Figure 4.20 for slicing method details.

The base of both end posts must be at least 2 to 4 inches above the top of the silt fence fabric on the middle posts for ditch checks to drain properly. Use a hand level or string level, if necessary, to mark base points before installation.

Install posts 3 to 4 feet apart in critical retention areas and 6 to 7 feet apart in standard applications.

Install posts 24 inches deep on the downstream side of the silt fence, and as close as possible to the fabric, enabling posts to support the fabric from upstream water pressure.

Install posts with the nipples facing away from the silt fence fabric.

Attach the fabric to each post with three ties, all spaced within the top 8 inches of the fabric. Attach each tie diagonally 45 degrees through the fabric, with each puncture at least 1 inch vertically apart. In addition, each tie should be positioned to hang on a post nipple when tightening to prevent sagging.

Wrap approximately 6 inches of fabric around the end posts and secure with 3 ties.

No more than 24 inches of a 36-inch fabric is allowed above ground level.

The rope lock system must be used in all ditch check applications.

The installation should be checked and corrected for any deviation before compaction. Use a flat-bladed shovel to tuck fabric deeper into the ground if necessary.

Compaction is vitally important for effective results. Compact the soil immediately next to the silt fence fabric with the front wheel of the tractor, skid steer, or roller exerting at least 60 pounds per square inch. Compact the upstream side first and then each side twice for a total of four trips.

Maintenance Standards

- Any damage shall be repaired immediately.
- If concentrated flows are evident uphill of the fence, they must be intercepted and conveyed to a sediment pond.
- It is important to check the uphill side of the fence for signs of the fence clogging and acting as a barrier to flow and then causing channelization of flows parallel to the fence. If this occurs, replace the fence or remove the trapped sediment.
- Sediment deposits shall either be removed when the deposit reaches approximately one-third the height of the silt fence, or a second silt fence shall be installed.
- If the filter fabric (geotextile) has deteriorated due to ultraviolet breakdown, it shall be replaced.

