SEDIMENT TASK FORCE - FOR RESIDENTS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SEDIMENT CONTROL

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
SWAN CANNING RIVERPARK
Perth NRM

What You Need to Know About Soil Erosion and Sediment Control During your Build or Renovations

Erosion and sediment control measures should be implemented on all building sites in Western Australia to prevent water pollution. **It's the law and fines can be applied.**

Be part of the solution – Do the right thing by our rivers and comply with environmental legislation.

Make sure your builders (and their subcontractors) comply with legislative requirements to prevent erosion and sediment run-off from your site reaching roads, gutters and drains when they build or renovate your home, or for any other activity that disturbs the soil (e.g. landscaping your garden, a new driveway or paths or having a swimming pool installed). This sediment may end up in your local wetlands, streams and rivers.

The **builder or manager** has prime responsibility for controlling and supervising the construction operation including all site works.

The **site supervisor or foreman** is responsible for coordinating and establishing good practices on site.

The **individual trades** carry responsibility for their work and actions.

How Does Erosion and Sediment Control Benefit You?

Renovations and homebuilding is stressful enough already. Your home is literally your environment, so make sure you protect it.

Effective erosion and sediment control can:

- Improve site planning for day-to-day operations;
- Reduce risk of a complaint and/or fines;
- Maintain good relationships with your neighbours;
- Reduce costs at the end of the works, such as site remediation or mud and dust clean-ups;
- Minimise the impact on your streetscape during works;
- Protect nearby stormwater infrastructure; and
- Keep your local waterways healthy.

What are the Benefits to the Community and the Environment?

Best practice erosion and sediment control on building site is good for everyone. Not only is public safety better when our roads and footpaths aren't covered in sand, keeping soil on site reduces the stress on our natural waterways and stormwater infrastructure. Sediment can collect in these systems, causing localised flooding or breeding grounds for mosquitoes and midges. Managing these issues ***after*** the event is an expensive task that is borne by the entire community.

Sediment controls can be up to 90% effective at reducing sediment runoff during normal flow. The effectiveness of sediment controls however reduces dramatically during storm events, so make sure your builder is well prepared and regulary inspects and maintains the erosion and sediment controls they have installed.

Did you know?

Effective erosion and sediment controls on building sites can prevent the loss of around 1 tonne of soil on a 500m2 lot. That's 10 tonnes (one dump truck load) less soil lost for every 10 houses built!

(Healthy Land and Water, 2019)

Did you know?

If you stop a layer of soil one centimetre deep from leaving your building site this is the same as stopping five trailer loads of soil being deposited in waterways.

(Ipswich City Council 2020)

What Do New Homeowners Need to Do?

Before the Build

Ask your builder about their Site Management Plan and make sure sediment and erosion control is included and check if they have a Site Water Management Plan.

Your builder is responsible for:

- A pre-construction site assessment and a plan for the appropriate erosion and sediment controls for your property. Each site is different and effective erosion and sediment control should be based on your sites' local soil and rainfall conditions;
- Ensuring all erosion and sediment controls installed on site are in accordance with International Erosion Control Association Australasia (IECA) best practice (www.austieca.com.au/publications/resources);
- Checking all erosion and sediment controls regularly (weekly at a minimum) and after every rainfall event to ensure they are working;
- Creating a stabilised access point for the site to minimise vehicle disruption; and
- Ensuring all wash down areas (including concrete and mortar slurries) are contained within the site.

Most importantly, your builder should ensure building materials do not enter drainage systems.

Refer your builder to the Sediment Task Force's Building Information Sheet and Builders' On-Site checklist

Before the Build

When landowners receive their keys before landscaping, driveways and other features are installed and exposed soil is left by the builders, owners should:

- Maintain erosion and sediment controls left by the builder (unless they are unsafe or ineffective);
- Clean up any sediment that has washed or blown onto the verge, footpath, gutter or roadway;
- Cover any exposed soil, particularly in front yards, as soon as possible with a groundcover such as mulch, gravel, vegetation, or geo-fabric. It is important to do this prior to any rainfall; and
- Aim to finish landscaping works as quickly as possible.

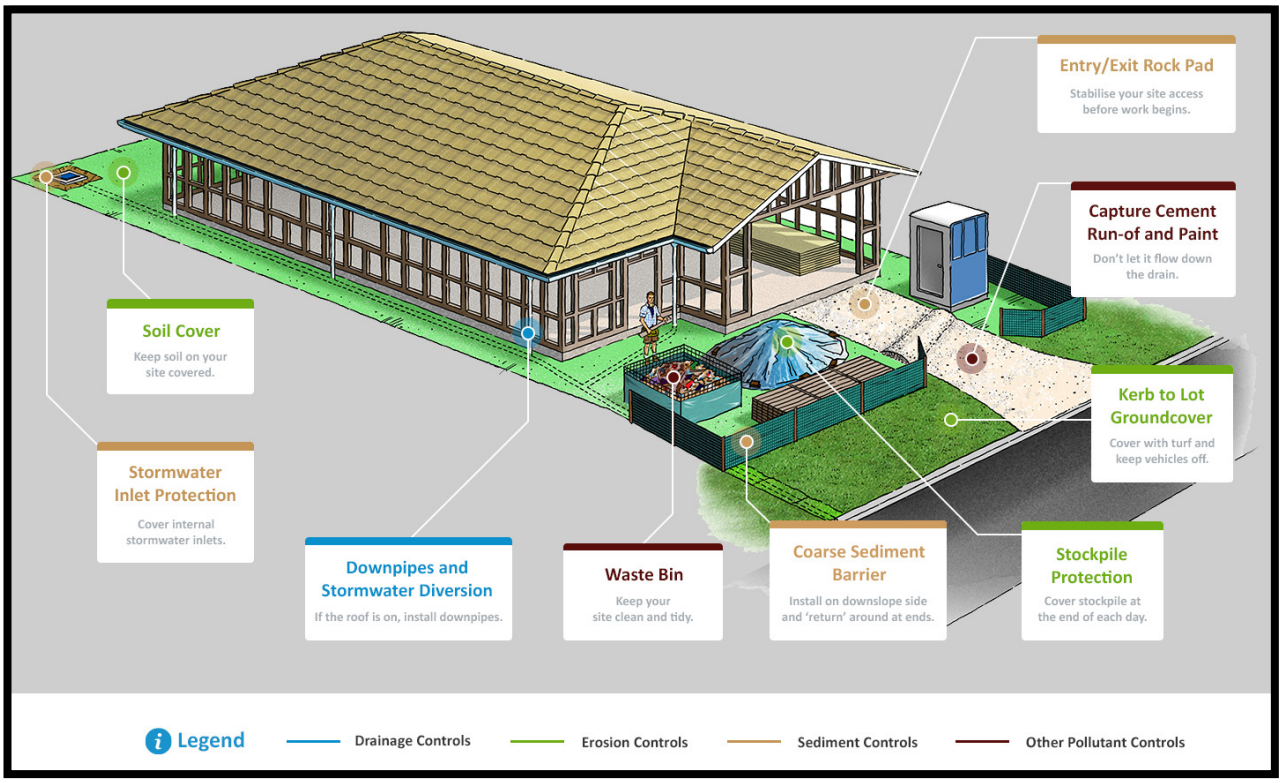

Diagram courtesy of Healthy Land and Water

Further Information

Specific site erosion and sediment control measures may be required to be installed by your builder to ensure compliance with individual Local Government Authority's Local Laws. Contact your Local Government website or enquiry line.

You (and your Builders) can find out more at:

Sediment Task Force Resources (including Builder's Checklist)
Master Builders Association
Housing industry Association (WA)
Healthy Land & Water
IECA (Australasia) - Best Practice Erosion and Sediment Control (BPESC) Document

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The Sediment Task Force is funded by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and supported by Perth NRM