

# STANDARD AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR STABILIZATION WITH SOD



## **Definition**

Stabilizing silt producing areas by establishing long term stands of grass with sod.

## **Purpose**

To stabilize the soil; reduce damage from sediment and runoff to downstream areas; enhance natural beauty.

## **Conditions Where Practice Applies**

On exposed soils that have a potential for causing off site environmental damage where a quick vegetative cover is desired. Moisture, either applied or natural, is essential to success.

## **Design Criteria**

1. Sod shall be bluegrass or a bluegrass/red fescue mixture or a perennial ryegrass for average sites. (CAUTION: Perennial ryegrass has limited cold tolerance and may winter kill.) Use turf type cultivars of tall fescue for shady, droughty, or otherwise more critical areas. For variety selection, contact Cornell Cooperative Extension Turf Specialist.
2. Sod shall be machine cut at a uniform soil thickness of 3/4 inch, plus or minus 1/4 inch. Measurement for thickness shall exclude top growth and thatch.
3. Standard size sections of sod shall be strong enough to support their own weight and retain their size and shape when suspended vertically from a firm grasp on the upper 10 percent of the section.
4. Sod shall be free of weeds and undesirable coarse weedy grasses. Wild native or pasture grass sod shall not be used

unless specified.

5. Sod shall not be harvested or transplanted when moisture content (excessively dry or wet) may adversely affect its survival.
6. Sod shall be harvested, delivered, and installed within a period of 36 hours. Sod not transplanted within this period shall be inspected and approved by the contracting officer or his designated representative prior to its installation.

## **Site Preparation**

Fertilizer and lime application rates shall be determined by soil tests. Under unusual circumstances where there is insufficient time for a complete soil test and the contracting officer agrees, fertilizer and lime materials may be applied in amounts shown in subsection 2 below. Slope land such as to provide good surface water drainage. Avoid depressions or pockets.

1. Prior to sodding, the surface shall be smoothed and cleared of all trash, debris, and of all roots, brush, wire, grade stakes and other objects that would interfere with planting, fertilizing or maintenance operations.
2. **The soil should be tested to determine the amounts of amendments needed.** Where the soil is acid or composed of heavy clays, ground limestone shall be spread to raise the pH to 6.5. If the soil must be fertilized before results of a soil test can be obtained to determine fertilizer needs, apply commercial fertilizer at 20 lbs. of 5-10-10 (or equivalent) and mix into the top 3 inches of soil with the required lime for every 1,000 square feet. Soil should be moist prior to sodding. Arrange for temporary storage of sod to keep it shaded and cool.

## **Sod Installation**

1. For the operation of laying, tamping, and irrigating for any areas, sod shall be completed within eight hours. During periods of excessively high temperature, the soil shall be lightly moistened immediately prior to laying the sod.
2. The first row of sod shall be laid in a straight line with subsequent rows placed parallel to, and tightly wedged against, each other. Lateral joints shall be staggered to promote more uniform growth and strength. Ensure that sod is not stretched or overlapped and that all joints are butted tight in order to prevent voids which would cause air drying of the roots. On sloping areas where erosion may be a problem, sod shall be laid with the long edges parallel to the contour and with staggered joints.

3. Secure the sod by tamping and pegging, or other approved methods. As sodding is completed in any one section, the entire area shall be rolled or tamped to ensure solid contact of roots with the soil surface.

4. Sod shall be watered immediately after rolling or tamping until the underside of the new sod pad and soil surface below the sod are thoroughly wet. Keep sod moist for at least two weeks.

### **Sod Maintenance**

1. In the absence of adequate rainfall, watering shall be performed daily, or as often as deemed necessary by the inspector, during the first week and in sufficient quantities to maintain moist soil to a depth of 4 inches. Watering should be done in the morning. Avoid excessive watering during applications.

2. After the first week, sod shall be watered as necessary to maintain adequate moisture and ensure establishment.

3. The first mowing should not be attempted until sod is firmly rooted. No more than 1/3 of the grass leaf shall be removed by the initial cutting or subsequent cuttings. Grass height shall be maintained between 2 and 3 inches unless

otherwise specified. Avoid heavy mowing equipment for several weeks to prevent rutting.

4. If the soil must be fertilized before results of a soil test can be obtained to determine fertilizer needs, apply fertilizer three to four weeks after sodding, at a rate of 1 pound nitrogen/1,000 sq.ft. Use a complete fertilizer with a 2-1-1 ratio.

5. Weed Control: Target herbicides for weeds present. Consult current Cornell Pest Control Recommendations for Commercial Turfgrass Management or consult the local office of Cornell Cooperative Extension.

6. Disease Control: Consult the local office of the Cornell Cooperative Extension.

### **Additional References**

1. Home Lawns, Establishment and Maintenance, CCE Information Bulletin 185, Revised November 1994. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

2. Installing a Sod Lawn. CCE Suffolk County, NY. Thomas Kowalsick February 1994, Revised January 1999. [www.cce.cornell.edu/counties/suffolk/grownet](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/counties/suffolk/grownet)