BMP 20.00. Silt Fence

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Objectives

The purpose of Silt Fence is to trap sediment and prevent it from being transported out of the project area to another area, or to a water body.

Description

Silt Fence is geotextile fabric secured to posts and secured in a trench, and/or with sandbags or drain rock.

Other Names

Geotextile for Sediment Control, Sediment Barrier.

Applicability

Silt Fence is used downslope from erosion-susceptible terrain to trap sheet flow run-off before the drainage exits the project site. Adequate space must be provided for pooled water on the uphill side of the fence.

Barrier locations are chosen based on site features and conditions (e.g. soil types, climate, terrain features, sensitive areas, etc.), design plans, existing and anticipated drainage courses, and other available erosion and sediment controls. Typical barrier sites are catchpoints beyond the toe of fill, or on sideslopes above waterways or drainage channels.

Although drainage in contact with the fence is to some degree filtered by the geotextile, the fabric's small pores not only block larger-sized eroded particles but also severely restrict water exfiltration rates and behaves like a dam. For this reason, Silt Fences are not to be used for concentrated flows in continuous flow streams or ditches; or as check dams.

Silt Fence can be installed in standing water to provide time for particles to settle.

Silt Fences are used to encircle stockpiled erodible material to prevent off-site sediment transport.

Since Silt Fence installation can cause significant damage, alternative best management practices (BMPs) should be considered for installation instead of Silt Fence. Use Fiber Rolls, compost socks, brush bundles to filter small amounts of sediment in shallow gullies or ditches. Temporary settlement basins, gravel berms, or foam barriers can be used as alternatives to Silt Fence.

Do not use Silt Fence on airport runways, taxiways, aprons, or within the Runway Safety Areas.

Selection Considerations

Use of sediment control measures and the level of effort should be commensurate with the potential problem. Silt Fence is not to be used solely as a project delineator (see Site Delineation, BMP-55).

- Use of a Silt Fence sediment control measure is usually more complex, expensive, and maintenance-prone than other sediment control measures.
- Consider impacts of the fence installation, maintenance, and removal on sensitive areas needing protection (e.g. avoid equipment encroachment on wetlands).
- Consider potential undesirable effects of fence placement (e.g. a trench in ground that will not readily "heal" after fence removal; undesirable effects of extent or depth of ponded water, etc.)
- An equipment access route and space for fence installation, maintenance, and removal must be available without encroaching into sensitive areas or off the project limits.
- Wire reinforcement can be used with Silt Fence by backing the geotextile fabric with chain link, polymeric mesh, or welded wire fencing. Below is a list of considerations for adding wire reinforcement to Silt Fence installation:
    - Consider using wire reinforcement and longer posts to resist overturn.
    - Consider using wire reinforcement in areas of high wind.
    - Consider using wire reinforcement for standing water installations.

Types of Silt Fence for Purchase:

- *With Pockets:* Sewn-in pocket Silt Fence is geotextile that has factory-sewn pockets for the posts and does not require post fasteners.
- *Without Pockets:* Silt Fence without pockets is geotextile fabric that requires fasteners to attach

the fabric to the posts or Silt Fence that is available with posts pre-attached.

- *Wire Reinforcement:* When Silt Fence is wire reinforced, the geotextile fabric is backed with chain link or welded wire fencing.

Methods of Installation:

- *Trenchless:* Drive support posts into the ground, attach geotextile on the upslope side of the line of stakes with a portion lying flat on the ground, and place clean rock or sandbags on the geotextile. Using sandbags to anchor the fence bottom is a less desirable method because of the tendency for undermining. Require removal of the rock or sandbags when the fence is removed.
- *Trench Key:* Drive support posts into the ground, excavate a trench on the uphill side along the line of the stakes, attach geotextile, and bury fence bottom. Use soil to backfill trench and compact to secure fence bottom. Compacted soil is preferred to gravel fill.
- *Machine Slice:* This method requires a Silt Fence installation machine or attachment. The machine utilizes a blade that plows or slices the fabric directly into the soil minimizing soil disturbance. Displaced soil must be manually backfilled into the slice before the tractor is used to mechanically compact the soil.

Design

Locate Silt Fence at a distance from the base of the slope or pile such that there is space for temporary storage of potential accumulated material. Consider a space of 4 feet for worker access if feasible. The grade and length of slope as well as soil erodibility must be considered when specifying silt fence. If the slope is steep or long, consider intermediate slope breaks.

Below are design considerations for Silt Fence that is not wire-reinforced:

- *Design Life*: 1 season (6 months) or less.
- *Contributing Sheet Flow Drainage Area*: Not to exceed 0.25 acres/100 ft. of fence.
- Maximum Height of Ponding Water: 18 in.

Guidelines for Maximum Slope Length for Silt Fence:

Slope (H:V)	Length of Slope Above Fence, Assumes 30 In High Fence
10:1	150 ft.
6:1	85 ft.
5:1	70 ft.
4:1	55 ft.
3:1	40 ft.
2:1	25 ft.
1:1	15 ft.

Relationship to Other Erosion and Sediment Control Measures

Sediment control measures are secondary to erosion prevention or soil stabilizing measures. Silt Fence may be used as part of a sequential system with other temporary or permanent measures such as vegetation, check dams, settling ponds, etc. Occasional flow velocity increases may be offset using corrective measures such as rock berms or other redirecting energy absorbers.

Common Failures or Misuses

- Inappropriate for intended function (e.g. used for check dam, flow diversion, diversion dam, etc.).
- Installation of Silt Fence in streams or concentrated flow.
- Use as a mid-slope protection on slopes greater than 4:1.
- Use as a perimeter control in high flow areas.
- Field-sewn seams.
- Use of incorrect type of fabric.
- Loose or sagging fabric between posts.
- Fence improperly attached or fastened to posts.
- Posts not driven deep enough into the ground.
- Posts spaced too far apart.
- Posts installed on incorrect side of fence.
- Placement of overlapped joints across pooled drainage areas.
- Fence allows spillover or bypass.
- Soil is not compacted next to fence after backfilling trench, allowing water to flow underneath.

- Trenches are too shallow to anchor the Silt Fence below ground or trenchless construction failure.
- Slope erosion occurs below the fenceline due to drainage that bypasses the barrier end, or water build-up that "blows out" a poorly-secured fence bottom.
- Fence function impairment due to sediment build-up, maintenance neglect, etc.
- Fence topples due to poor installation and/or high levels of impounded backup water or sediment.
- Uneven distribution of pooled drainage along non-level fenceline surface reduces efficiency.
- End of fence is not "J-hooked" upslope allowing water to run around the end.
- Poor support system (e.g. soil too rocky to secure posts, fabric stapled to trees, etc.).
- Installation of Silt Fence in a long continuous run.

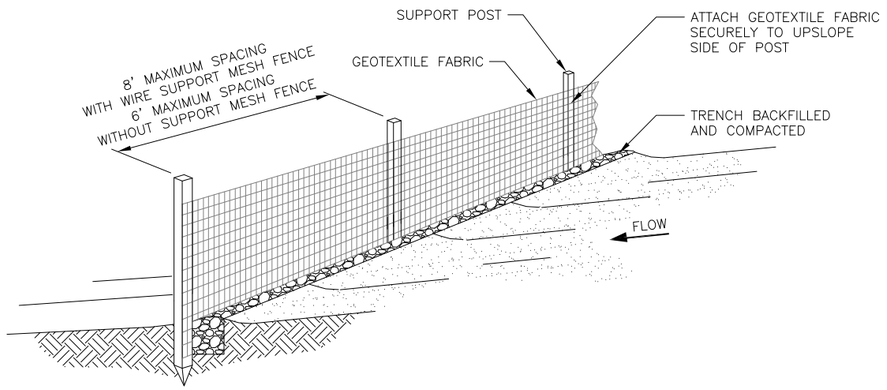
SPECIFICATIONS

Standard Specification

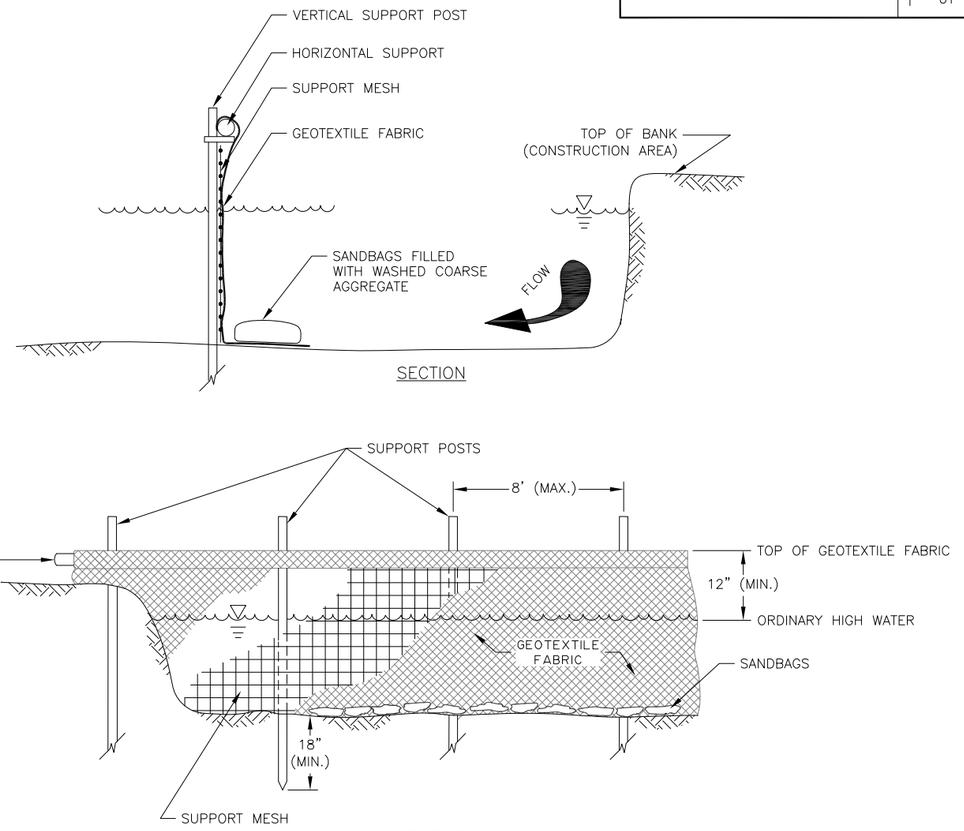
- 633 – Silt Fence
- 729-2.04 - Geosynthetics

Drawing

- BMP-20.00 Silt Fence (Sheets 1 and 2)



GENERAL INSTALLATION
NOT TO SCALE



STANDING WATER INSTALLATION
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SILT FENCE GENERAL NOTES:

MATERIALS

SILT FENCE: SEE SPECIFICATION SECTION 633, SILT FENCE.

INSTALLATION

1. INSTALL FENCELINE ALONG A LEVEL CONTOUR AND PERPENDICULAR TO ANTICIPATED SHEET FLOW DRAINAGE PATH(S).
2. ORIENT END SECTIONS UPHILL SLIGHTLY IN A J-HOOK TO PREVENT WATER FROM GOING AROUND THE SILT FENCE.
3. DO NOT EXCEED 100 FEET FOR EACH 1/4-ACRE OF DRAINAGE AREA AND DO NOT EXCEED 500 FEET REGARDLESS OF DRAINAGE AREA.
4. THE DIFFERENCE IN ELEVATION BETWEEN THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST POINT ALONG THE TOP OF THE SEDIMENT FENCE SHALL NOT EXCEED ONE-THIRD THE FENCE HEIGHT.
5. WHERE GROUND SURFACES ARE UNEVEN, INSTALL SHORTER FENCES FOLLOWING CONTOURS (RATHER THAN INSTALLING ONE LONG, CONTOUR-CROSSING FENCE THAT DIRECTS DRAINAGE TO ACCUMULATE IN LOW SPOTS).
6. LOCATE FENCE 3 TO 10 FEET BEYOND TOE OF FILL TO LEAVE ROOM FOR A BROAD, SHALLOW SEDIMENTATION POOL AND FOR EQUIPMENT ACCESS DURING FENCE MAINTENANCE AND REMOVAL.
7. IF FEASIBLE, LEAVE A MINIMUM OF 3.5-FOOT BUFFER BETWEEN FENCING AND SENSITIVE RECEIVING AREAS.
8. PLACE GEOTEXTILE ON THE UPSLOPE SIDE OF POSTS OR, WHEN USING SILT FENCE WITH SEWN-IN POCKETS, PLACE POCKETS ON THE UPSLOPE SIDE OF THE FENCE.
9. EXCAVATE TRENCHES NOT WIDER OR DEEPER THAN NECESSARY FOR PROPER INSTALLATION OF THE SILT FENCE. DO NOT EXCAVATE TRENCHES IN PERMAFROST.
10. AT JOINTS, ROLL ENOUGH OF THE ENDS OF SECTIONS TOGETHER AT SUPPORT POST SUCH THAT THE JOINT PREVENTS SILT-LADEN WATER FROM ESCAPING THROUGH THE FENCE.
11. IF USING THE FRONT WHEEL OF A TRACTOR OR ROLLER, COMPACT THE UPSTREAM SIDE FIRST, THEN EACH SIDE TWICE (A TOTAL OF FOUR TRIPS).
12. KEEP FENCE FABRIC TAUT.
13. WHEN USING SUPPORT MESH, ATTACH GEOTEXTILE TO THE SUPPORT MESH WITH FASTENERS SPACED EVERY 24 INCHES AT THE TOP AND MIDSECTION.

MACHINE SLICE INSTALLATION (NOT IN PERMAFROST)

1. USE A SILT FENCE INSTALLATION MACHINE OR ATTACHMENT TO PLOW OR SLICE THE FABRIC DIRECTLY INTO THE SOIL.
2. BACKFILL SOIL LOOSENED BY THE BLADE INTO THE SLICE AND USE THE TRACTOR TO MECHANICALLY COMPACT THE SOIL.
3. TUCK FABRIC DEEPER INTO THE GROUND WHERE NECESSARY.
4. INSTALL SUPPORT POSTS ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE FENCE FOLLOWING SIMILAR PROCEDURES FOR THE TRENCH METHOD.

WINTER INSTALLATION (NOT IN PERMAFROST)

1. DIG A TRENCH.
2. BACKFILL TRENCH WITH THE LOOSENED SOIL AND COMPACT SOIL PRIOR TO POST INSTALLATION.
3. MOISTEN THE BACKFILLED SOIL SO IT WILL FREEZE UP AND GRIP THE SILT FENCE FABRIC IN PLACE.
4. DO NOT LEAVE LARGE FROST CHUNKS AS THE BACKFILL.

INSPECTION

1. INSPECT FENCELINE FOR CONTINUITY, COLLAPSE, UNDERMINED AREAS, AND DAMAGE. DO NOT EXCAVATE TRENCHES IN PERMAFROST.
2. INSPECT FABRIC FOR TEARS, PUNCTURES, FRAYING, WEATHERING, AND COMPROMISED INTEGRITY.
3. CONFIRM THAT THE FENCE POSTS ARE SECURE.
4. ENSURE THE FENCE IS KEYED IN AND THAT THERE IS NO UNDERCUTTING.
5. LOOK FOR EVIDENCE OF SEDIMENT OR EROSION FLOW LEADING OFF THE DOWNHILL EDGE OF THE FENCE. (THIS MAY BE AN INDICATOR OF DRAINAGE BYPASS OR FENCE UNDERMINE.)
6. NOTE DEPTH OF SEDIMENT BUILD UP AT THE FENCE.
7. LOOK FOR SIGNS OF INADEQUATE PROTECTION OF OFF-SITE SENSITIVE AREAS.
8. CHECK FOR SEDIMENT FLOWING THROUGH THE FENCE.
9. CHECK FOR HOLES IN FENCE WHERE WIRE TIES ARE USED TO SECURE GEOTEXTILE FABRIC TO THE SUPPORT POST.

MAINTENANCE

1. INSTALL ALTERNATE OR ADDITIONAL BMPS AS NEEDED TO PREVENT UNDESIRABLE SEDIMENTATION OF SENSITIVE AREAS.
2. REPLACE DAMAGED FABRIC.
3. REMEDY FENCE SAGS AS NEEDED.
4. REMOVE ACCUMULATED SEDIMENT BEFORE IT ACCUMULATES TO ONE-HALF THE CAPACITY, OR ONE-THIRD OF THE AVAILABLE STORAGE IF PROTECTING A WATER BODY OR STORM DRAIN INLET.
5. DISPOSE OF SILT WASTE IN APPROVED MANNER/LOCATION (TYPICALLY IN A NON-EROSION AREA).
6. IF THERE IS EVIDENCE OF EXCESSIVE SEDIMENTATION AGAINST THE SILT FENCE, PROVIDE INCREASED EROSION CONTROL UPSLOPE.

REMOVAL

1. WHEN DISTURBED AREAS ARE PERMANENTLY STABILIZED OR SEDIMENT PROTECTION IS NO LONGER NEEDED, COLLECT AND PROPERLY DISPOSE OF ACCUMULATED SEDIMENT OR SEED IN PLACE.
2. CUT FABRIC AT GROUND LEVEL AND REMOVE SUPPORTS.
3. DISCARD FILTER FENCE AS APPROVED. AVOID DAMAGE TO SENSITIVE AREAS (E.G. WETLAND OR SURFACE WATER).

STANDING WATER NOTES:

INSTALLATION

1. DRIVE SUPPORT POSTS INTO THE GROUND AND ATTACH A HORIZONTAL SUPPORT MEMBER.
2. ATTACH SUPPORT MESH AND GEOTEXTILE ON THE UPSLOPE SIDE OF THE STAKES, EXTEND GEOTEXTILE ON THE GROUND UPSLOPE OF THE FENCE, AND ANCHOR THE GEOTEXTILE WITH SANDBAGS OR EQUIVALENT TO PREVENT GAPS.
3. SPACE SUPPORT POSTS A MAXIMUM OF 8 FEET APART.
4. KEEP FENCE FABRIC TAUT.

REVISIONS		
Date	Description	By

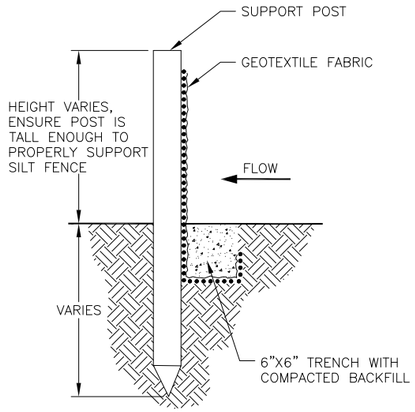
State of Alaska DOT&PF

SILT FENCE (NOTES, GENERAL INSTALLATION, & STANDING WATER INSTALLATION)

APPROVED

Date 12/2015 X/XX/XX

BMP-20.00



TRENCH DETAIL
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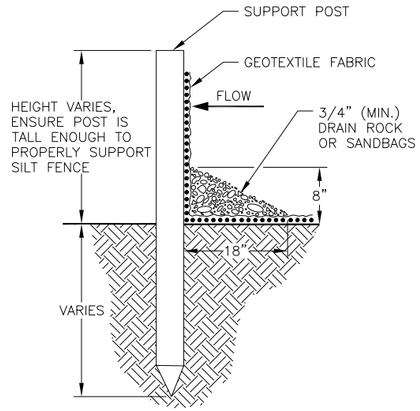

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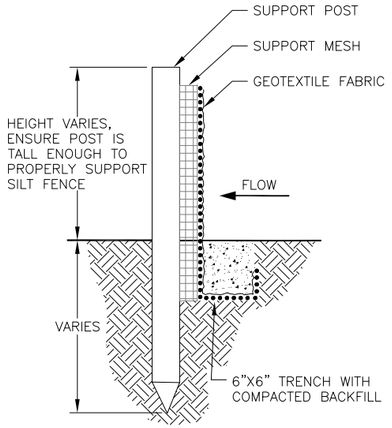

SUPPORT MESH REINFORCED FABRIC DETAIL
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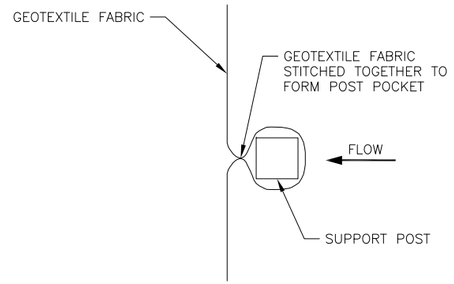

SEWN-IN POCKET DETAIL
NOT TO SCALE

TRENCH NOTES:
INSTALLATION
1. DRIVE SUPPORT POSTS INTO THE GROUND.
2. FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATIONS FOR POST BURIAL DEPTH.
3. EXCAVATE A TRENCH ON THE UPHILL SIDE ALONG THE LINE OF THE STAKES.
4. ATTACH GEOTEXTILE TO STAKES AND BURY GEOTEXTILE BOTTOM.
5. BACKFILL TRENCH AND COMPACT TO SECURE FENCE BOTTOM.

TRENCHLESS NOTES:
MATERIALS
CLEAN ROCK OR SANDBAGS.

INSTALLATION
1. DRIVE SUPPORT POSTS INTO THE GROUND.
2. ATTACH GEOTEXTILE ON THE UPHILL SIDE ALONG THE LINE OF THE STAKES.
3. EXTEND GEOTEXTILE ON THE GROUND UPHILL OF THE FENCE.
4. PLACE DRAIN ROCK ON GEOTEXTILE.

REMOVAL
1. WHEN SILT FENCE IS LOCATED IN WETLANDS OR SENSITIVE AREAS, REMOVE CLEAN ROCK OR SANDBAGS WHEN THE SILT FENCE IS REMOVED.

SUPPORT MESH REINFORCED FABRIC NOTES:
INSTALLATION
1. DRIVE SUPPORT POSTS INTO THE GROUND.
2. EXCAVATE A TRENCH ON THE UPHILL SIDE ALONG THE LINE OF THE STAKES. DO NOT EXCAVATE TRENCHES IN PERMAFROST.
3. EXTEND SUPPORT MESH A MINIMUM OF 3 INCHES INTO THE TRENCH.
4. ATTACH GEOTEXTILE TO STAKES AND BURY GEOTEXTILE BOTTOM.
5. BACKFILL TRENCH AND COMPACT TO SECURE FENCE BOTTOM.

REVISIONS		
Date	Description	By

State of Alaska DOT&PF

SILT FENCE (DETAILS)

APPROVED

Date X/XX/XX

BMP-20.00