

Construction Memo No. 1-01

MEMO TO: Chief District Engineer
TEBMs for Construction
District Construction Engineer
Resident Engineers
Active Consultant Engineers

FROM: Dexter Newman, P. E. Director
Division of Construction

DATE: February 19, 2001

SUBJECT: Erosion Control

Almost 4 years ago, we had major problems with erosion control. The Department made erosion control a major point of emphasis, and worked out solutions in conjunction with the regulatory agencies and contracting community. Recently, we have had problems with erosion control on several projects. It seems like we are getting complacent and accepting practices that I thought were part of the past.

Each project, by specification, must have an individual Best Management Practices (BMP) plan. This plan is to be developed jointly by the contractor and resident engineer before starting the project, and is a constantly evolving document that changes as the project changes. In recent years, the project developers are doing a better job of planning for erosion control in the design phases; however, that doesn't relieve the construction staff of their responsibility for the BMP plan. Changes made to the project's phasing and scheduling need to be reflected in the updated BMP. Just because the project has the original erosion control devices in place shown on the plans, doesn't necessarily mean that it is in compliance with desired erosion control practices. To heighten awareness, and also to obtain some examples, the District Office staff needs to start signing off on the project BMP, and a copy should be sent to the Central Office. This doesn't have to be a very formal document, with the goal being practicality and results.

By specification and regulation, the project engineer is required to perform a weekly erosion control inspection and also after a ½-inch rainfall, and document the findings. This documentation must be kept with the "official" project BMP records. Practically everything associated with erosion control is a pay item, including most maintenance activities to keep the controls functioning. Please keep in mind that the permanent erosion control technique is establishing permanent vegetation, with everything else being only a temporary measure until the vegetation grows. It is the prime contractor's duty to get the project permanently seeded. If he chooses to utilize a seeding subcontractor, any scheduling conflicts in getting the subcontractor in to do the work is simply part of the headaches of being a prime contractor, and is not an excuse for ignoring seeding. Working late in the season is not an excuse for either not seeding or using temporary seeding in lieu of permanent seeding. The prime contractor has the duty of scheduling the work to get permanent seeding done.

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The contractor must be notified of any problems noted during the erosion control inspections. The Specification plainly describes the procedures and time limits for correcting the deficiencies. There is enough “teeth” in the specification to “bite” any contractor who doesn’t comply. This also applies to cleaning and maintaining the installed devices. The majority of residents and contractors are doing an excellent job of erosion control, let’s try to make it 100 percent.

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