

# Draft 'Guidelines for erosion and sediment control on building sites'

This document answers frequently asked questions about proposed changes to the Guidelines for erosion and sediment control on building sites.

## What are the guidelines and who are the guidelines for?

Everyone working on a building site is responsible for preventing erosion and sediment from polluting our waterways.

The guidelines seek to update the *Guidelines for Erosion and Sediment Control and Building Sites* prepared by the previous Department of Land and Water Conservation in 2001.

The guidelines will help small-scale builders, certifiers, stormwater specialists and anyone working on construction sites smaller than 2,500m<sup>2</sup> understand how to prevent erosion and sediment pollution to protect our waterways.

## Why are we updating the guidelines?

The existing guidelines were published in 2001, so some techniques have become outdated and are no longer best practice. There are also some aspects of erosion and sediment control that are not covered. This update provides accessible and up-to-date guidance and techniques for erosion and sediment control, to help prevent our waterways from being polluted.

## What are the main changes?

The updated guidelines:

- have an increased focus on site planning, how to scope your site and what is required as part of an erosion and sediment control plan, including a 'Am I ready to start construction?' checklist
- include amendments to outdated guidance, such as the recommendation to use straw bale filters (these fall apart easily and are generally no longer recommended)
- are easier to read – rather than multiple factsheets, all information is included in one document with improved accessibility
- include greater detail on important aspects of erosion and sediment control, such as wash down areas and site maintenance.

## How do the guidelines relate to the 'Blue Book'?

The *Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and construction, 4th edition* prepared by Landcom, known as the 'Blue Book', applies to urban construction sites over 250m<sup>2</sup>. Our guidelines apply to sites under 2,500m<sup>2</sup>. Our guidelines are intended to complement the Blue Book (not replace it) and provide up-to-date, accessible guidance that provides clear procedures for preventing erosion and sediment pollution, with more detailed, technical guidance contained in the Blue Book. There are signposts throughout the guidelines to relevant sections of the Blue Book.

### How do I implement the guidelines?

The guidelines will help you plan erosion and sediment control measures for a site in a logical way. You should read about understanding your site and what to look for before using the techniques outlined in the guidelines. There is also information about how to prepare your erosion and sediment control plan, which you can only do once you understand your site and techniques available to you.

Once you have a construction certificate and before construction begins, use the ‘**Am I ready to start construction?**’ checklist at the back of the guidelines to make sure you are fully prepared.

### How will the guidelines support the construction industry?

The up-to-date guidelines will help small-scale builders, certifiers, stormwater specialists and anyone working on construction sites to understand their obligations to prevent erosion and sediment pollution and protect our waterways. As well as protecting the environment, erosion and sediment control helps to:

- manage site damage caused by bad weather
- reduce delays to site operations
- avoid the possibility of fines
- create a cleaner and more organised worksite.

### Can compliance action be taken if the guidelines aren’t followed?

If your conditions of development consent require you to implement erosion and sediment controls in accordance with the guidelines, compliance action may be taken if you do not follow the guidelines.

### Are the guidelines mandatory?

It is intended that once finalised, the guidelines will be referenced in the standard conditions of development consent (which councils can also access in the planning portal).

If your conditions of development consent require you to implement erosion and sediment controls in accordance with the guidelines, compliance with the guidelines is mandatory for your development.

We suggest using the guidelines to help manage erosion and sediment control on your site even if it’s not specified in the development consent conditions. Erosion and sediment control is everyone’s responsibility, and the updated advice can help provide a logical and safe way to manage your site.

### What else is NSW Government doing to improve water quality?

The NSW Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028 aims to address key threats to the NSW marine estate, including poor water quality. The strategy includes numerous actions to improve water quality, including:

- the creation of a diffuse source water pollution strategy
- oyster reef restoration
- resealing dirt roads
- stabilising riverbanks to protect against erosion.

### Where can I find more information about erosion and sediment control?

For more detailed information about erosion and sediment control, consult the ‘Blue Book’.

**My development consent refers to the existing guidelines – which ones should I use?**

Use the guidelines or other documents referred to in your conditions of development consent.

**Can I use these guidelines for other pollutants/contaminants on site?**

No, these guidelines are for erosion and sediment control only. Other contaminants may need to be dealt with differently. You should investigate best practice measures for controlling these pollutants or contaminants.

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## More information

Read more about the changes to sediment and erosion control guidelines on the [DPE website](#).