

# GRADING PERMIT FACT SHEET KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE



Knox County Engineering & Public Works  
865.215.5800

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## **Best Management Practices**

Sediment is the number one pollutant by volume in Knox County's waterways. It has been estimated that an un-vegetated and uncovered lot can release 30 tons per acre of soil during a large rain event. Erosion prevention and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) are temporary measures implemented during construction to reduce the impact caused by land-disturbing activities. BMPs must be planned to remain function until final ground cover is established. Inspect your erosion controls after every rain and at least twice per week.

## **PLAN IN PHASES**

Large projects should be conducted in phases. It is best to plan ahead to remove existing vegetation only when absolutely necessary.

## **GROUND COVER**

Revegetation (permanent or temporary) is the best form of erosion control for any site. Plant temporary vegetation for erosion control. Non-vegetative cover (e.g., straw, matting, mulch, etc.) can be used when it is not a good time of year to plant permanent vegetation. Cover soil stockpiles and excavated soil with secured tarps or plastic sheeting. ***Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) regulation requires temporary vegetation be planted on sites that are idle for more than 15 days.*** Plant permanent vegetation as soon as possible.

## **CONSTRUCTION SITE ENTRANCE**

Construction site entrances need to be designed to prevent soil from leaving the site. A gravel construction entrance built to specifications can significantly reduce the amount of soil leaving the site. Gravel entrances need to be a minimum of 50 feet in length and have a minimum depth of 6-inches.

## **SEDIMENT BARRIERS**

Sediment barriers, such as check dams and silt fences, function in a manner similar to a leaky dam. Muddy water to pools behind the barrier for a period of time, allowing the soil to settle-out of the water before draining through the barrier.

A single row of silt fence is needed for every 100 feet of slope length for each disturbed area. Silt fence must be trenched in the ground a minimum of 8-inches to work properly. The fence posts should be at least 36-inches long and staked a minimum of 16-inches into the ground. They should be set on 5-foot centers. Silt fences are only effective if placed along the contours of the landscape.

Storm drains need to be protected by a sediment barrier until permanent ground cover is established. See graphics.



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## **Regulations**

The Knox County Grading Permit requirements have been established to reduce both erosion and sediment problems resulting from the development process and the increase of urban runoff from developed land. Regulations relevant to grading and other land-disturbing activities are contained in the *Knox County Stormwater Management Ordinance* and the *Knox County Stormwater Management Manual*. Article 6 of the *Knox County Zoning Ordinance* outlines the procedure for administering and enforcing a Grading Permit.

In general, Knox County requires that persons responsible for such activities comply with TDEC's General NPDES Permit for Discharges of Stormwater Associated with Construction Activities, also called the NPDES Construction General Permit (CGP).

An application for a Grading Permit shall be submitted to the Knox County Department of Engineering and Public Works prior to the beginning of any grading, clearing, excavating, filling or other disturbance of natural terrain.

All grading activities in Knox County must follow these basic guidelines:

- ✓ Practice sediment prevention and erosion control best management practices as described in this pamphlet, the *Knox County Stormwater Management Manual*, and TDEC's *Tennessee Sediment and Erosion Control Handbook*.
- ✓ Drainageways shall not be altered or obstructed in such a way as to create flooding or sediment problems outside the project area.

A Knox County Grading Permit does not imply compliance with any other regulations. For questions regarding wet weather springs, creeks, rivers, sinkholes, wetlands, or other considerations, please contact Knox County Engineering & Public Works or the agencies listed under contact information in this brochure.

## **Enforcement**

A violation of the Knox County Stormwater Management Ordinance may be punished by assessment of a civil penalty of not less than \$250, or more than \$5000 per day, per citation.

## **Other Contacts**

<b>Metropolitan Planning Commission</b> 865.215.2500	<b>Tennessee Department of Environment &amp; Conservation</b> 865.594.6035 Surface Water 615.532.9224 Groundwater	<b>Natural Resource Conservation Service</b> 865.671.3583 ext. 3
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