

Mulching

Plan Symbol



Description

Mulching is a temporary soil stabilization erosion control method where materials such as grass, hay, wood chips, wood fibers, or straw are placed on the soil surface. In addition to stabilizing soils, mulching enhance the absorption of water by the soil, reduce evaporation losses, regulate soil temperatures, and reduce the speed of storm water runoff over an area.

When and Where to Use It

Use erosion control mulching on level areas or on slopes up to 50 percent. Where soil is highly erodible, nets should only be used in connection with organic mulch such as straw and wood fiber.

Mulch is an effective ground cover when the establishment of vegetation is improbable due to severe weather conditions (winter conditions), poor soil, or steep slopes.

Installation

Grading is not necessary before mulching but may be required if vegetation is expected to grow.

Anchor loose hay or straw by applying tackifier, stapling netting over the top, or crimping with a mulch-crimping tool.

Effective use of netting and matting material requires firm, continuous contact between the materials and the soil. If there is no contact, the material will not hold the soil and erosion will occur underneath the material.

Materials that are heavy enough to stay in place (for example, bark or wood chips on flat slopes) do not need anchoring.

Apply hydro-mulch in spring, summer, or fall to prevent deterioration of mulch before vegetation becomes established.

There must be adequate coverage to prevent erosion, washout, and poor plant establishment. If an appropriate tacking agent is not applied, or is applied in insufficient amounts, mulch is lost to wind and runoff.

Inspection and Maintenance

- Inspect every 7 calendar days and within 24-hours after each rainfall event that produces ½-inches or more of precipitation.
- Repair or replace damaged areas of mulch or tie-down material immediately.



Straw Mulch



Straw Mulch with Tackifier

Preventive Measures and Troubleshooting Guide

Field Condition	Common Solutions
Mulch blows away.	Anchor straw mulch in place by applying a tackifier, crimping, punching, or track walking. May need to use a different BMP.
Coverage is inadequate.	Follow recommended application rates. Ensure that the correct amount of material is implemented. Reapply as necessary.
Mulch has washed away.	Do not place mulch in concentrated flow areas. Reapply as necessary.
Area was improperly dressed before application.	Remove existing vegetation and roughen embankment and fill areas by rolling with a punch type roller or by track walking.
Excessive water flows across stabilized surface.	Use other BMPs to limit flow onto stabilized area and/or to reduce slope lengths. Do not use to stabilize areas with swift moving concentrated flows.