Polyacrylamides (PAMs)

Plan Symbol

Description

Anionic polyacrylamides (PAM) are non-toxic chemical materials used for controlling soil erosion and sedimentation on construction and agricultural sites.

When and Where to Use It

Anionic PAM is available in emulsions, powders, gel bars, or logs. It is recommended that other BMPs be used in combination with anionic PAM. The use of seed and mulch for additional erosion protection beyond the life of the anionic PAM is required. Repeat application is recommended if disturbance occurs to target areas. The following are additional recommendations:

- Use setbacks when applying anionic PAM near natural waterbodies.
- Consider that decreased performance can occur due to ultra-violet light and time after mixing when applying anionic PAM.
- In concentration channels, the effectiveness of anionic PAM for stabilization decreases.
- If seed is applied with anionic PAM, mulch should be used to protect seed.
- Never add water to PAM, PAM must be slowly added to water.
- NOT ALL POLYMERS ARE PAM.

Installation

The manufacturer's guidelines for application should be followed.

- Only use the anionic form of PAM. Cationic PAM is toxic and should NOT be used.
- PAM and PAM mixtures have to be environmentally harmless, harmless to fish, wildlife, and plants.
- The pure form of anionic PAM should have less than or equal to 0.05 percent acrylamide monomer by weight, as established by FDA and EPA.
- In order to maintain less than or equal to 0.05 percent of acrylamide monomer, the maximum application rate of PAM, in pure form, should not exceed 200 pounds/acre/year. Do not over apply.
- Users of anionic PAM should obtain and follow all MSDS requirements and manufacturer's recommendations. The following criteria are generally included on the MSDS:
  - Ultra high molecular weight of 6 to 24 mg/mole (preferably 12-15 mg/mole)
  - Non-combustible
  - Does not change soil pH
  - Expiration date included
- Additives such as fertilizers, solubility promoters or inhibitors to PAM should be non-toxic.
- To prevent exceeding the acrylamide monomer limit in the event of a spill, the pure form of anionic PAM should not exceed 200 pounds/batch at 0.05 percent acrylamide monomer (AMD) or 400 pounds/batch at 0.025 percent AMD.

Inspection and Maintenance

- PAMs have been estimated to degrade approximately 10 percent per year. The effects are accelerated in highly exposed areas.
- If PAM treated soil is left undisturbed, reapplication may be necessary after 6-8 weeks.
- Further anionic PAM applications may be required for disturbed areas including highly silty and clayey soils, steep slopes, long grades, and high traffic or precipitation areas.
- All equipment should be maintained to provide the application rates recommended by the manufacturer.
- Rinse all equipment used to mix and apply anionic PAM thoroughly with water.

Liquid PAM

Solid/Block PAM

Preventive Measures and Troubleshooting Guide

Field Condition	Common Solutions
Slope was improperly dressed before application.	Roughen slope and fill damaged areas.
Coverage is inadequate.	Follow recommended application rates. Reapply to thin areas.
Sprayed areas degrade or become ineffective.	Follow recommended application rates. Consider other or additional BMPs. Reapply as necessary.
Sprayed slope has spot failures.	Repair slopes, add jute netting and re-spray damaged areas.
Portions of the sprayed area have been disturbed.	Keep workers and equipment off sprayed areas. Repair and re-spray areas that have been damaged.
PAM is washed off slope.	Allow at least 24 hours for the materials to dry before a rain event. Follow manufacturer's recommendations. Reapply as necessary.
Excessive water flows across stabilized surface.	Use other BMPs to limit flow on stabilized area. Use other BMPs to reduce slope lengths. Do not use to stabilize slopes with swift moving concentrated flows.