

5.7 Dewatering Measures



Description

Dewatering measures provide a stable area for receiving and treating water pumped from excavation or work areas prior to being released off the site. These practices reduce sediment impacts to downstream water resources.

Conditions Where Practice Applies

De-watering measures are used whenever water, either surface or subsurface, prevents or hinders construction activities and has the potential of contributing sediment to streams. This practice is appropriate for any kind of pumping used in conjunction with construction activities.

Planning Considerations

Construction activities often require that water be pumped from an area to facilitate work. This water often has large amounts of suspended sediments. Rather than discharge this water directly to a stream, a means to settle or remove sediment must be provided.

A dewatering plan should be prepared utilizing ground water conditions and soils information to predict areas where de-watering will likely occur. Plans should include the length of time de-watering will occur, the method of de-watering (pumping, siphon...), the discharge point(s), methods to control sediment impacts and the contents of a written log to be kept on-site. These plans may need to be approved by local authorities prior to construction.

All dewatering discharges with suspended solids should pass through a practice to remove sediments. While a vegetated filter areas may be sufficient for some situations (e.g. short duration low pumping rates) many will need additional measures, such as sediment traps,

filter bag or flocculation. All structures must have adequate outlet protection to prevent gully erosion. Please note that the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency will find turbid discharges to the stream resulting from any dewatering activity a violation of Ohio Revised Code 6111.04 independent of the methods employed. Therefore even if one method is selected, additional measures may be required to fully treat turbid water.

The particle size distribution, that is the relative proportion of sands, silts and clays, of a soil that is suspended will determine the difficulty of removing sediments. Soils with coarser particle size distributions (large proportion of sand) will be easier to settle out with filter strips and settling ponds. Finer particle size distributions (predominantly silt and clays) will be increasingly difficult and may need a series of measures.

Ground Water Lowering: Often dewatering wells are established to lower the ground water table for utility installation or construction. Generally, this water is free from suspended solids and may be discharged to waters of the state provided the water is not contaminated.

Measures should be taken to ensure the discharge from the de-watering wells does not flow over disturbed areas and suspend sediments, resulting in contaminated discharge. Waterways established to transport dewatering flow should be protected from erosion from the point of discharge all the way to waters of the state. Extending hoses to waters of the state will ensure the discharge remains free from suspended solids. This practice is recommended for discharges of short duration.

Water pumped from wells is about 55° F, which may cause thermal impacts in some situations. High pumping rates near small streams in summer will have major changes in stream metabolism, i.e., throw off spawning. Where this potential occurs, groundwater should not be discharged directly to the stream but roughed through settling ponds or other shallow holding ponds.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water requires a Water Withdraw Registration for the de-watering activities in the event the facility has the capacity of pumping in excess of 100, 000 gallons per day. This registration must be submitted to ODNR within 90 days following the completion of the project. A water withdraw registration can be obtained by contacting ODNR, Division of Water at 614-265-6735. Assistance regarding proper well installation and abandonment is also available.

Design Criteria

Vegetated Filter Areas: Densely vegetated areas may offer sufficient conditions to treat short duration discharges provided that: flow is not channelized directly to a water resource and the area encourages infiltration, slow overland flow and settling. A minimum of 100 feet is required to utilize a vegetated area. Dense grass or areas with natural depressions will provide the best conditions. Critical areas like wetlands (e.g. vernal pools) or areas with sensitive vegetation that will be damaged (smothering) by sedimentation should not be used.

Sediment trap or basin: In most cases, contaminated discharge should be directed to a sediment trap where the suspended solids can settle/filter out prior to the discharge to waters of the state. Sediment traps should have sufficient storage to receive all the discharged water from pumping and detain this water a minimum of 24 hours. The sediment storage volume is directly related to the pumping capacity and the amount of turbidity. The sediment pond should be designed to optimize the amount of travel time through the impoundment.

The sediment pond should not be more than 4 feet deep with the distance between the intake and outlet maximized to the extent practical.

Pump intakes should withdraw water from the surface of the trench or work area in order not to re-suspend or continually mix water. Continually drawing water from the floor of the area will draw the muddiest water and increase the amount of sediment that must be removed.

Geotextile Filter Bags are an increasingly common way to remove sediment from dewatering discharge. Commonly discharge is pumped into a filter bag chosen for the predominant sediment size. Filter bags are manufactured products made typically from woven monofilament polypropylene textile (coarse materials, e.g. sands) or non-woven geotextile (silts/clays). They are single use products that must be replaced when they become clogged or half full of sediment.

While they may be useful, they are generally high flow products, which have limited ability to treat fine-grained sediments. Gravity drained filter bags should apply the following:

- They should be placed outside of a vegetated filter area and not in close proximity to the stream or water resource.
- They must sit on a relatively flat grade so that water leaving the bag does not cause additional erosion. Placing the bag on a flat bed of aggregate will maximize the flow and useful surface area of the bag.
- They should be used in conjunction with a large vegetative buffer or a secondary pond or barrier.

Enhanced Treatment Through Multiple Practices. The need for further reduction in turbidity will likely require more than one treatment measure. The following are devices or measures that when used in sequence with others will reduce turbidity.

Filter bags (gravity flow) are highly variable depending on the pore size and flow rate. Typically filter bags are limited to removing large particles (small sands and large silts).

Sediment traps, weir tanks, filter boxes are effective for the removal of large particles such as sand. Their effectiveness increases as detention times increase.

Sand Media Filters are effective for removal of smaller particles such as sand and large silts. These often have the ability to backflush and thus maintain effectiveness and flow rate.

Some commercially available additives are available for further decreasing turbidity. Chitosan and chitin based additives have been shown to significantly increase the effectiveness of filtration and settling. Chitosan (Poly-D-glucosamine) is a low-toxicity product extracted from Chitin (Poly-N-acetyl-D-glucosamine), a by-product of the shellfish industry. Other products such as anionic polyacrylamide (anionic PAM) are commercially available to increase settling. Often these are utilized through wet or dry dosing mechanisms or as water runs over a gel block upstream of a settling or filtration practice. Each product should be utilized within the manufacturer's specifications and tailored to the soil and site conditions.

Particulate filter units utilizing cartridges or enclosed filter bags can remove smaller particles depending on the filter size. This type of measure is usually necessary to treat clays. Filters may need to be changed daily or more frequently.

An example of an enhanced treatment might include: dewatering a trench with a trash pump to a settling tank or pit then pumping from the settling practice to a sand media filter or to a particulate filter.

Common Problems/Concerns

Complete settling of solids within the Sediment Basin does not occur prior to discharge. The length to width ratio of the pond must be increased to lengthen travel time through the structure. In addition, flocculent may be necessary to promote settlement.

Water discharged from subsurface/ground water pumping maybe significantly lower in temperature than that of the receiving stream. The water will need pre-conditioned in order to minimize the biological affects on the stream.

References

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, 2002. *Erosion & Sediment Control Technical Bulletin #2: Application of Anionic Polyacrylimide for soil stabilization and stormwater management*. <http://www.dcr.state.va.us/sw/docs/anoinic.pdf>

Specifications
for
De-Watering

1. A de-watering plan shall be developed prior to the commencement of any pumping activities.
2. The de-watering plan shall include all pumps and related equipment necessary for the dewatering activities and designate areas for placement of practices. Outlets for practices shall be protected from scour either by riprap protection, fabric liner, or other acceptable method of outlet protection.
3. Water that is not discharged into a settling/treatment basin but directly into waters of the state shall be monitored hourly. Discharged water shall be within +/- 5° F of the receiving waters.
4. Settling basins shall not be greater than four (4) feet in depth. The basin shall be constructed for sediment storage as outlined in Chapter 6, SEDIMENT BASIN OR SEDIMENT TRAP. The inlet and outlet for the basin shall be located at the furthest points of the storage. A floating outlet shall be used to ensure that settled solids do not re-suspend during the discharge process. The settling basin shall be cleaned out when the storage has been reduced by 50% of its original capacity.
5. All necessary National, State and Local permits shall be secured prior to discharging into waters of the state