

# 7.9 Mulching

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**Description**

A protective layer of mulch, usually of straw, applied to bare soil is used to abate erosion by shielding it from raindrop impact. Mulch also helps establish vegetation by conserving moisture and creating favorable conditions for seeds to germinate.

**Conditions Where Practice Applies**

Mulch should be used liberally throughout construction to limit the areas that are bare and susceptible to erosion. Mulch can be used in conjunction with seeding to establish vegetation or by itself to provide erosion control when the season does not allow grass to grow. Mulch and other vegetative practices must be applied on all disturbed portions of construction-sites that will not be re-disturbed for more than 21 days.

**Design Criteria**

See specifications for Mulching.

**Maintenance**

Additional mulching is necessary to cover exposed soil conditions when observed during routine maintenance inspections.

### **Common Problems / Concerns**

The application of synthetic binders must be conducted in such a manner as to not be introduced into watercourses.

Weather considerations must be addressed to ensure the application of synthetic binders are not washed away and introduced into watercourses.

The use of a mulch cover is not recommended for areas, which will exhibit higher velocities than 3.5 feet/second. An erosion control matting is recommended for areas which will exhibit higher velocities.

Areas which have been mulched should be inspected and maintained if necessary every 7 days or within 24 hours of a rain event greater than or equal to 0.5 inches to ensure adequate protection.

Specifications  
for  
**Mulching**

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1. Mulch and other appropriate vegetative practices shall be applied to disturbed areas within 7 days of grading if the area is to remain dormant (undisturbed) for more than 21 days or on areas and portions of the site which can be brought to final grade.
2. Mulch shall consist of one of the following:
  - Straw - Straw shall be unrotted small grain straw applied at the rate of 2 tons/ac. or 90 lb./1,000 sq. ft. (two to three bales). The straw mulch shall be spread uniformly by hand or mechanically so the soil surface is covered. For uniform distribution of hand-spread mulch, divide area into approximately 1,000 sq.ft. sections and place two 45-lb. bales of straw in each section.
  - Hydroseeders - Wood cellulose fiber should be used at 2,000 lb./ac. or 46 lb./1,000 sq. ft.
  - Other - Acceptable mulches include mulch mattings and rolled erosion control products applied according to manufacturer's recommendations or wood mulch/chips applied at 10-20 tons/ac.
3. Mulch Anchoring - Mulch shall be anchored immediately to minimize loss by wind or runoff. The following are acceptable methods for anchoring mulch.
  - Mechanical - Use a disk, crimper, or similar type tool set straight to punch or anchor the mulch material into the soil. Straw mechanically anchored shall not be finely chopped but be left generally longer than 6 inches.
  - Mulch Nettings - Use according to the manufacturer's recommendations, following all placement and anchoring requirements. Use in areas of water concentration and steep slopes to hold mulch in place.
  - Synthetic Binders - For straw mulch, synthetic binders such as Acrylic DLR (Agri-Tac), DCA-70, Petroset, Terra Tack or equal may be used at rates recommended by the manufacturer. All applications of Synthetic Binders must be conducted in such a manner where there is no contact with waters of the state.
  - Wood Cellulose Fiber - Wood cellulose fiber may be used for anchoring straw. The fiber binder shall be applied at a net dry weight of 750 lb./acre. The wood cellulose fiber shall be mixed with water and the mixture shall contain a maximum of 50 lb./100 gal. of wood cellulose fiber.