

Attention Developers and Contractors

This is a reminder that all non-agricultural earth disturbance activities in Knox County are required to obtain a Storm Water Management and Sediment Control Permit before any earth is disturbed.

Permits applications are available at the Knox Regional Planning Commission office at 117 E. High St. Mt. Vernon.

Don't let erosion wash away your profits

Contractors need to develop erosion control systems

What is erosion control and why is it costing construction so much?

Erosion control is not something new. Farmers have been dealing with “soil loss” and a need for erosion control for as long as people have worked the land.

With the farmer's need for reducing soil loss came the development of many methods for erosion control.

The construction industry has also been dealing with soil loss for as long as contractors have been working in the rain. However, unlike the farmer, the construction industry has never had a need to prevent soil loss. As a result, the contractors have not developed efficient methods and planning strategies for controlling erosion.

Without a strategy, erosion control response becomes **reactive** instead of **proactive** and gets very costly.

One of the primary sources of pollutants from construction sites is sediment. As development continues at a rapid pace and environmental issues continue to be a rising concern, the construction industry has an increased obligation to prevent soil (sediment) loss from construction sites.

Erosion control can be a significant additional cost if not properly addressed at the onset of a project and throughout construction.

Reducing or preventing sediment from leaving a large construction project takes expertise, planning, proper erosion control installation, maintenance and management.

On almost every job site dirt is exposed, and at least once during construction it will rain. Rain and exposed dirt lead to erosion, sedimentation, pollution and ultimately, fines. Contractors have responded to stop work orders and fines by making efforts to learn about erosion control and to try and be proactive on their job sites, yet they still find themselves with extraordinary erosion control costs and continued erosion control problems.

The reality is that with critical schedules to manage, contractors just do not have the resources to best manage erosion control on their projects. One of the challenges many contractors face is they

have not received the necessary training or have the experience to be considered experts in erosion control.

Utilizing professional erosion control contractors to manage stormwater and erosion control on construction sites can bring the needed balance between environmental regulations, construction costs and construction logistics. The professional erosion control contractor's business is to know the regulations, the municipalities, and the most cost-efficient methods of pollution prevention, so that the contractor can focus on the actual construction of the project.

A professional erosion control contractor will consult with the customer from the initial planning stages of a project through completion.

The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

(a required item on most development plans) should be prepared with the contractor, not for the contractor. Too often pollution prevention plans don't take into consideration the logistics of the construction project, making it nearly impossible for the contractor to follow the plan — and an inappropriate plan can be worse than having no plan at all.

Erosion control must be planned ahead of construction, should be prepared with the construction team and should be implemented and managed with the contractor and a specialist in the erosion control industry.

Installing inappropriate erosion control measures on a project or improperly installing the correct measures can cost a project as much as if there were no erosion control measures used at all. A reputable erosion control contractor has proper training on the use and installation of all erosion control measures. The firm will properly install necessary erosion control measures on a project to provide initial site stabilization and will maintain and manage these erosion control measures throughout the project. This ensures that, at minimal cost, the project and the environment will be best protected.

Regulatory agencies and municipalities are requiring environmental monitoring on projects and request written reports from construction projects. An erosion control contractor stays current with all regulatory requirements — city, county, state and federal.

The erosion control contractor will monitor a project, consult with the customer and provide erosion control services through every phase of a project to ensure site compliance. An erosion control contractor will prepare and submit the necessary regulatory reports to any and all agencies, as well as the customer.

Working with an erosion control specialist to manage a site can greatly reduce or eliminate the risk and exposure to the agencies and municipalities.

With all the proper planning and implementation, there still remains the unfortunate emergency, the torrential rains that may come at 2 a.m. and bring the hillside down with it. A full-service erosion control contractor can provide 24-hour emergency services.

Construction sites need to be inspected within 24 hours of ½-inch of rain. With an erosion control contractor on board, the contractor has the necessary expertise to mobilize for these situations.

Erosion control is old ... but its use in construction is new. With ever changing environmental regulations and continued development, contractors can rely on the expertise of erosion control

specialists to reduce or eliminate over-expenditures on erosion control and to ensure that their project is in compliance with environmental regulations.

For assistance with developing an erosion control strategy or learning more about construction site erosion control please contact the Knox Soil and Water Conservation District at 1025 Harcourt Road, Mount Vernon or call 393-6724.

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