

damage. Both practices should be cleaned out when the height of the collected sediment reaches 1/3 the height of the log or fence. Place the sediment back on your yard where it is unlikely to wash back off.

- **Rain gutter splash blocks and extensions.** Splash blocks placed at the outlet of your downspout lower the energy of the discharged water. When you lower the energy of the water, you also reduce its ability to pick up and carry sediment. Splash blocks can be made of many materials, such as concrete, plastic, wood or rocks. Gutter extensions attach to the bottom of your downspout and direct water to a stabilized area in your yard such as a grassed or mulched area or a sidewalk or driveway. If allowed by your municipality, gutter extensions can temporarily route storm water all the way to the street while your landscape establishes.

- **Temporary mulch.** Temporary mulch, such as straw applied at around 2000 lbs/ac on all bare soil areas may also be effective at reducing erosion and sedimentation where slopes are not excessively steep. Mulch intended to remain on the ground over the winter should be crimped into the soil with a shovel or covered with jute matting, tree limbs or other materials that will break the wind. Wood landscaping mulch is also effective and may be raked up and reused in the landscape later on. Wood mulch piles can also act as a sediment barrier similar to silt fence or fiber logs.

Maintenance. Any controls your builder leaves on your lot or that you install must be maintained periodically to ensure effectiveness. Maintenance is especially important after storm events. If you alter controls or install new ones be sure that the changes will not result in flooding or property damage. Soils that do wash from your yard into the street should be recovered and replaced on your landscape. Soils must not be washed into storm drain inlets.

Landscaping. When you do begin landscaping do not have loads of soil, compost or mulch dropped off in the street. Materials placed in the street will easily wash to a storm drain and may be a traffic hazard. Request that materials be dropped off on your driveway or in the yard.

For More Information. For more information on erosion control contact your local soil and water conservation district, local building department or the DEQ Storm Water program at 307-777-7781.

Thank you for helping to protect Wyoming's waters!



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For questions about the program, contact the Storm Water coordinator at 307-777-7781



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What is erosion?



If you've just moved in to a newly built home the yard around your house may be only partly landscaped or it may be all bare soil. Areas of bare soil around your home are susceptible to

erosion where sediment, exposed to rain or moving water from runoff, can be picked up and transported off your property. That eroded soil may end up on your neighbors' property or it might end up in streets where it can enter city storm drains. Once in the storm sewer system it runs through pipes, untreated until it enters rivers, creeks or lakes in your community.

Because construction strips off the vegetation that protected the surface from rain and runoff, bare ground loses much more sediment than an equal area of vegetated ground. Various studies show that soil losses from small construction sites can be 10 times higher than losses typical urban and rural land uses. Another study found soil losses from larger construction sites to be as much as 2,000 times greater than losses from forested lands.

Why is erosion control important?

When sediment-laden water enters surface waters it can cause several problems:

- Sediment in the water column can block sunlight that would otherwise reach aquatic plants. This damages plants that provide food and cover for fish and other aquatic organisms.
- Water-borne sediment can damage fish gills.



- Suspended sediment may also increase water treatment costs for municipalities and rural water districts.
- When sediment settles to the bottom it fills in spaces where fish lay eggs, potentially reducing fish populations.
- When topsoil is lost from residential lots it makes subsequent landscaping more difficult and costly since the subsoil has fewer nutrients, less organic matter and less water holding capacity.
- Sediment that settles in storm drains and storm drain catch basins also increases municipal costs because the sediment must be periodically removed. Blocked drains may cause localized flooding.

What can I do?

If you own a new home where the landscaping is not yet installed, sediment from your yard could contribute to any or all of the problems noted above. There are many ways to keep sediment or topsoil on your lot through the use of various control measures. Your builder may have installed some of these on your lot prior to selling the house:



- **Landscaping.** The fastest, easiest and most permanent way to reduce sediment loss is to install landscaping right away. Grass, trees, shrubs and mulch cover the soil, reduce the energy of rain drops before the water actually reaches the soil limiting the ability for runoff to transport sediment off site. While landscaping is probably the best method of controlling erosion, many aspects of landscape installation are seasonal so you may have several months of bare soil before you can install a landscape.
- **Fiber logs or silt fences.** These work pretty much the same way and are installed on the downhill side of a lot. Both pond water temporarily behind porous materials to allow sediment to settle out. Fiber logs are shorter and have less capacity than silt fence, but are less subject to wind