

# NEW HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO SOIL EROSION CONTROL

As the proud owner of a new home, establishing a lawn and landscaping are likely two of the many items on your growing "to do" list.

## New Homeowner TO DO List:

- √ Buy furniture
- √ Unpack
- √ ***Transfer Soil Erosion Permit***
- √ ***Control Soil Erosion***
- √ Plant trees & shrubs
- √ Establish lawn

If your yard does not have a lawn and landscaping, there may be some important items to keep in mind to prevent soil and debris from leaving your property. This will involve managing some activities on your site and making sure that all proper controls are in place.

You will need to take a look around your lot to see what kind of soil erosion controls are already in place or needed, determine current drainage patterns, and establish a timeline for putting in your lawn and landscaping.

## Why is this important?

Soil Erosion is a major contributor to pollution in our waterways. Uncontrolled runoff during weather events, i.e., wind and rain, can move the soil off-site and into our lakes and streams. The dirt may move off-site through ditches, pipes or across the property and be deposited into a creek, stream or wetland.

Sediment can clog pipes and leave streets a muddy mess. It can destroy natural areas, wetlands, creeks and harm the plants and creatures living there. Residual sediment can damage habitat for insects and fish.



Silted waterway

The State of Michigan enacted legislation to address this problem (Public Act 91). The Water Resources Commissioner's office has the authority to enforce the Soil Erosion program for many Oakland County communities. The State of Michigan oversees all local programs and referrals, special concerns, and related pollution incidents. Permits and fees become the responsibility of the new owners at closing.

## Soil Erosion Permit

When construction of your home began, the builder was required to obtain a permit or a waiver from Oakland County to protect the environment from soil erosion.

As a new homeowner, you now have that responsibility until your lot has permanent vegetation and landscaping.

If your home had a permit as part of your building process, you should have received a permit transfer form at closing. It is your responsibility to maintain the control measures and ensure they function properly, according to the plan your builder submitted for the permit. If your home had a waiver, you still must maintain or install controls to stop soil from eroding off your site.

## Permit Transfer -How Does This Happen?

To transfer a permit, the landowner or builder (initial permit holder) and new homeowner must complete a *Permit Transfer Information Form*.

The form then needs to be submitted to the Water Resources Commissioner (WRC), Soil Erosion Unit, located at One Public Works Drive (Building 95 West), Waterford, MI 48328-1907. A permit cannot be transferred if there are any outstanding balances or violations against the permit.

### What are my responsibilities?

Some of the activities you will need to manage, depending on the slope and nature of your site, include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Install or maintain a temporary silt fence barrier or sod filter strip around your lot. Only a WRC-approved fence may be used.** A silt fence is a black, woven plastic material with wooden stakes. The fence should be trenched 6 inches into the ground and will stop muddy runoff water and filter-out the soil.  
Using sod to filter (at least 25' wide) where runoff water leaves your property, may be acceptable for your area. These controls need to remain in place until final vegetation is established. If removed for other work projects, they will need to be reinstalled at the end of each day.



Silt fencing on-site

- **Establish cover as quickly as possible.** If the timing, budget, or season is not appropriate for seeding or sod, you will need to install additional controls such as mulch or other vegetative material to prevent soil loss from your lot.

- **Redirect your downspout so rain water flows away from the bare soil on your lot.** Use a flexible plastic pipe to direct water gently away from bare soil to avoid it washing away.

### What if I do not maintain my controls?

You will receive a letter explaining that you are not in compliance and you have 5 days to correct the problem. If the items are not corrected, you could be subject to one or all of the following: the cost of WRC installing the necessary controls, or a stop work order and/or other legal action to return the site into compliance.

### How do I close the permit?

When you believe that all permanent vegetation is in place (90% growth, 1 inch tall on every square foot of disturbed area), you can request a final completion inspection.

### Are there any additional fees (renewals)?

If the site remains permitted for more than the duration set when the permit was issued, you will need to pay renewal fees in three-month increments until it has final vegetation.

#### **FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- [www.oakgov.com/water](http://www.oakgov.com/water) (Choose "Programs & Services", then "Soil Erosion")
- [www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq) (Choose "Land", then "Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control")
- [Michigan Dept of Environmental Quality](#) (Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control)  
Warren Office - Phone (586) 753-3718



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**Oakland County  
Water Resources Commissioner**

**Soil Erosion and  
Sedimentation Control Unit  
(248) 858-5389**

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