

What does Lapeer County's Soil Erosion Program Have to do With My project?



The State of Michigan passed a law in 1994 called the Natural Resources Environmental Protection Act to safe- guard all of Michigan's natural resources from wetlands, lakes and streams to sand dunes near our great lakes. Part 91 of that law is regulation of building projects, commercial or residential, that may have impact on local waterways by soil erosion or soil settling in lakes, streams, or county drains.

Each county in Michigan has the primary responsibility of managing construction projects to reduce soil erosion and eliminate sedimentation from local waterways.

What is soil erosion?

The wearing away of land by wind or water. Sometimes this happens naturally. It becomes a problem when soil erosion is accelerated as a result of human activities.

What is sedimentation?

When solid particles are removed from their site of origin and end up in lakes, streams or wetlands by erosion.

Why is controlling erosion and sedimentation important?

Sedimentation is the greatest pollutant to our lakes and streams in Michigan. When erosion is unchecked we lose valuable topsoil for farming or maintaining a lawn. The soils then settle in our lakes and streams and reduce recreational sports on the water, kill off wildlife, and increase flooding in our townships.



What does the Soil Erosion Law require of me?

Any building project which creates an earth disturbance or earth change that is an acre in size or within 500 ft of a local waterway or wetland, must have a permit from Lapeer County Health Department. This includes building of a new home, business, garage, addition, pole barn, grading land to flatten out hills or filling in valleys and adding drainage to property. The landowner must apply for a permit and meet specific requirements to proceed with the project while protecting local waterways from soil intrusion.

How do I obtain a permit?

An application must be filled out and a site plan/drawing of the proposed project must be

submitted to Lapeer County Health Department Environmental Health Division. The application comes with a set of instructions you should read and understand before drawing a site plan. The application will be reviewed and when approved, a permit is issued. Applications can be downloaded from Lapeer County Health Department website at <http://lchd.lapeer.org> or picked up at the office located at

Lapeer County Health Dept
Environmental Health Division
1800 Imlay City Rd, Lapeer.

How do I stop soil erosion or sedimentation from happening while completing my project?

There are several temporary soil erosion control measures that can be installed around your building project to stop soil from leaving the site and entering local waterways.

What are temporary soil erosion control measures?

Silt Fence: a short fence made of geotextile fabric and wooden posts that stop soil from moving down hill. It is typically placed between the earth disturbance area and any sloped areas leading to wetlands, streams, lakes or ponds. The fabric is trenched in a minimum of 6 inches into the ground, wooden stakes are used to hold it in place and it captures soils moving away from the construction site through gravity and natural drainage.

Storm Sewer Inlet Protection: if your construction project is near a storm drain, you must take care to keep all soils from entering the drain, settling there, and causing flooding. Using a combination of stone and geotextile fabric, soils can be slowed and settled out of drainage waters before they enter the storm sewer during your construction project.

If your project is on a steep slope that leads directly to water such as a lake lot, an Erosion Blanket or Mulch Blanket may be needed. This is straw held together with biodegradable twine. Usually comes in rolls to be laid out over stock piles of soil. Erosion blankets reduce the amount of topsoil that is washed away during rains. They are used as mulching material to cover topsoil and grass seed, usually installed after construction completion to help vegetation growth.

What happens if the rules are not followed?

State law and Lapeer County ordinance have enforcement measures in place to stop earth disturbances without permits when needed, and when erosion measures are not adequate. Landowners can incur fines and be issued civil citations.

For further information about the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Program, please call the Environmental Health Division of the Lapeer County Health Department at 810-667-0392. You may also visit our website at <http://lchd.lapeer.org> and click on the soil erosion program for more information.