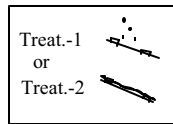


## STD & SPEC 3.36 SOIL STABILIZATION BLANKETS & MATTING



### Practice Description

The installation of a protective covering (blanket) or a soil stabilization mat on a prepared planting area of a steep slope, channel or shoreline, to aid in controlling erosion on critical areas by providing a microclimate which protects young vegetation and promotes its establishment. In addition, some types of soil stabilization mats are also used to raise the maximum permissible velocity of turf grass stands in channelized areas by "reinforcing the turf" to resist the forces of erosion during storm events.

### Conditions Where Practice Applies

On short, steep slopes where erosion hazard is high and planting is likely to be too slow in providing adequate protective cover; in vegetated channels where the velocity of design flow exceeds "allowable" velocity; on streambanks or tidal shorelines where moving water is likely to wash out new plantings; or in areas where the forces of wind prevent standard mulching practices from remaining in place until vegetation becomes established.

### TREATMENT-1: SOIL STABILIZATION BLANKET

(Allowable Velocity Range During Vegetation Establishment: 0-4 f.p.s)

### Materials

1. Combination Blankets - Shall consist of a photo-degradable plastic netting which covers and is entwined in a natural organic or man-made mulching material. The mulching material shall consist of wood fibers, wood excelsior, straw, coconut fiber, or man-made fibers. The blanket shall be of consistent thickness with the mulching material/fibers evenly distributed over its entire length. The mulching material/fibers must interlock or entwine to form a dense layer that not only resists raindrop impact, but will allow vegetation to penetrate the blanket. The blanket shall be nontoxic to vegetation and to the germination of seed and shall not be injurious to the unprotected skin of humans. At a minimum, the plastic netting must cover the top side of the blanket and possess a high web strength. The netting shall be entwined with the mulching material/fiber to maximize strength and provide for ease of handling.
2. Jute Mesh - It shall be a uniform, open, plain weave, of undyed and unbleached single jute yarn. The yarn shall be a loosely twisted construction and shall not vary in thickness by more than one half of its normal diameter. Jute mesh shall be new and shall conform to the following:
  - a. Length of jute mesh shall be marked on each roll.
  - b. There shall be 0.60-inch openings (+/- 25%) between strands, lengthwise.
  - c. There shall be 0.90-inch openings (+/- 25%) between strands, widthwise.

- d. Weight shall average 0.90 lbs./square yard with a tolerance of 5%.

As previously noted, jute can be used alone as a blanket.

2. Other Treatment-1 Products - These shall conform to manufacturer's specifications and be approved by the Plan-Approving Authority prior to being specified for a particular application. These products should be installed in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations, provided those recommendations are at least as stringent as this specification. Again, it is recommended that VDOT's "Approved Products List" be consulted. In no case shall these products cover less than 30% of the soil surface.
3. Staples - Staples for anchoring Treatment-1 shall be No. 11-gauge wire or heavier. Their length shall be a minimum of 6 inches. A larger staple with a length of up to 12 inches should be used on loose, sandy, or unstable soils.

### Installation Requirements

Site Preparation - After site has been shaped and graded to approved design, prepare a friable seedbed relatively free from clods and rocks more than 1½ inches in diameter and any foreign material that will prevent uniform contact of the protective covering with the soil surface.

Planting - Lime, fertilize, and seed in accordance with seeding or other type of planting plan. When using jute mesh on a seeded area, apply approximately one-half the seed after laying the mat. The protective covering can be laid over sprigged areas where small grass plants have been inserted into the soil.

Where ground covers are to be planted, lay the protective covering first and then plant through the material as per planting design.

When open-weave nets are used, lime, fertilizer, seed and mulch should be applied before laying the net. When a combination blanket (such as an "excelsior" blanket) is used, seed and soil amendments must also be applied before the blanket is laid.

Orientation - See Manufacturer's specifications for orientation of **Treatment-1** for different topographic conditions.

Laying and Stapling (see Plate 3.36-2) - If instructions have been followed, all needed check slots will have been installed, and the protective covering will be laid on a friable seedbed free from clods, rocks, roots, etc. that might impede good contact.

1. Start laying the protective covering from the top of the channel or top of slope and unroll down-grade.
2. Allow to lay loosely on soil - do not stretch.
3. Upslope ends of the protective covering should be buried in an anchor slot no less than 6-inches deep. Tamp earth firmly over the material. Staple the material at a minimum of every 12 inches across the top end.

4. Edges of the material shall be stapled every 3 feet. Where multiple widths are laid side by side, the adjacent edges shall be overlapped a minimum of 2 inches and stapled together.
5. Staples shall be placed down the center, staggered with the edges at 3 foot intervals.

Check slots - On highly erodible soils and on slopes steeper than 4:1, erosion check slots should be made every 50 feet (see Plate 3.36-2). Insert a fold of the material (separate piece) into a 6-inch trench and tamp firmly. Staple fold to "main" blanket at minimum 12-inch intervals across the upstream and downstream portion of the blanket.

Note: Many combination blankets are designed and manufactured to resist movement and uplift to a point which check slots may not be required. Plan designers and review authorities are urged to study manufacturers' recommendations and site conditions.

Joining Protective Coverings - Insert a new roll of material into an anchor slot, as with upslope ends. Overlap the end of the previous roll a minimum of 12 inches, and staple across the end of the roll just below the anchor slot and across the material every 12 inches.

Terminal End - At the point at which the material is discontinued, or at which time the protective covering meets a structure of some type, fold 4 inches of the material underneath and staple every 12 inches (minimum).

At bottom of slopes - Lead net out onto a level area before anchoring. Turn ends under 4 inches, and staple across end every 12 inches.

Final Check - These installation techniques must be adhered to:

1. Protective blanket is in uniform contact with the soil.
2. All lap joints are secure.
3. All staples are driven flush with the ground.
4. All disturbed areas have been seeded.

## **TREATMENT-2: SOIL STABILIZATION MATTING**

(Allowable velocity range after vegetative establishment: 0 - 10 f.p.s.)

### **Materials**

Matting - The majority of these products provide a three dimensional geomatrix of nylon, polyethylene, or randomly oriented monofilaments, forming a mat. These products contain ultra violet (UV) inhibiting stabilizers, added to the compounds to ensure endurance and provide "permanent root reinforcement."

The three dimensional feature creates an open space which is allowed to fill with soil. The roots of the grass plant become established within the mat itself, forming a synergistic root and mat system. As the grass becomes established, the two actually "reinforce" each other, preventing movement or damage to the soil. Allowable velocities are increased considerably over natural turf stands.

Selection of the appropriate matting materials along with proper installation become critical factors in the success of this practice. VDOT's "Approved Products List" can be a real asset in the selection process. Consultation with the supplier or the manufacturer and thorough evaluation of performance data to ensure proper selection of a soil stabilization matting are also essential. Although many manufacturers claim their products may inhibit erosion associated with channel velocities of up to 20 ft./sec., it is recommended that any velocities that exceed 10 ft./sec. be properly protected with some form of structural lining (see Std. & Spec. 3.17, STORMWATER CONVEYANCE CHANNEL).

Staples - Staples or anchoring methods and recommendations vary by manufacturers. The expectation of high velocities should dictate the use of more substantial anchoring.

### **Installation Requirements**

Site Preparation - After site has been shaped and graded to approved design, prepare a friable seedbed relatively free from clods and rocks more than 1 inch in diameter, and any foreign material that will prevent contact of the soil stabilization mat with the soil surface. If necessary, redirect any runoff away from the ditch or slope during installation.

Planting - Lime, fertilize and seed in accordance with MS #1 and the approved plan, paying special attention to the plant selection that may have been chosen for the matted area. If the area has been seeded prior to installing the mat, make sure and reseed all areas disturbed during installation.

Mulching - Mulch (normally straw) should be applied following installation of **Treatment-2** at rates noted in Std. & Spec. 3.35, MULCHING.

Laying and Securing - See Plates 3.36-4, 3.36-5 and 3.36-6. Similar to installing **Treatment-1**, but Plan Approving Authority's requirements or manufacturer's recommendations must be followed as detailed. The key to achieving desired performance is dependent upon proper installation.

Check Slots - See Plate 3.36-4. Matting manufacturers vary significantly in their check slot requirements. Similar to the installation of **Treatment-1**, a check slot may be required when laying **Treatment-2** to

"correct" the flow of water if it has the potential to undermine the matting. Most authorities (including VDOT) require that the sides of the matting also be entrenched, creating a slope shelf for the material to rest on, preventing water from entering under the mat on the sides.

Securing the Material and Joining Mats - Again, product specifications vary - upstream and downstream terminal slots, new roll overlaps and multiple width installations differ by various products and manufacturers.

Final Check - These installation techniques must be adhered to:

1. Soil stabilization mat is in uniform contact with the soil.
2. All required slots and lapped joints are in place.
3. The material is properly anchored.
4. All disturbed areas are seeded.

### Maintenance

All soil stabilization blankets and matting should be inspected periodically following installation, particularly after rainstorms to check for erosion and undermining. Any dislocation or failure should be repaired immediately. If washouts or breakage occurs, re-install the material after repairing damage to the slope or ditch. Continue to monitor these areas until which time they become permanently stabilized; at that time an annual inspection should be adequate.