



DWR – NPDES-SOP – G – 16 –Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Handbook-01092026

Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Handbook

3.4.4 Trash and Debris



Source: CalTrans (2017)

Definition and Purpose

The management of trash and debris refers to the proper containment and disposal of macro debris, also known as gross solids. It ensures good housekeeping by providing designated waste collection and scheduling regular disposal. Though not often thought of as a stormwater pollutant, gross solids can leach various chemicals and toxins, yield increased microplastics, and clog drainage infrastructure (Roesner and Kidner, 2007).

Appropriate Applications

Trash and debris management apply to construction sites where waste is generated. These include debris from land clearing, such as trees and shrubs, and rubble from demolished structures; packaging materials, such as wood, paper, and plastic, as well as scrap or surplus building materials like metals, rubber, plastic, and glass; and masonry products. Additionally, construction waste such as brick, mortar, timber, steel, pipe cuttings, electrical scraps, Styrofoam, and other packaging materials requires proper disposal. Lastly, proper disposal of domestic waste, including food containers, beverage cans, plastic wrappers, and cigarettes, and onsite sanitary waste facilities are critical components of this practice.

Limitations and Maintenance

Inspect the site for evidence of trash and construction debris being placed outside of the designated collection areas. Ensure construction waste is collected, removed, and disposed of only at authorized disposal areas. Remove and dispose of macro litter on a regular or as-needed basis and following the completion of construction activities, to prevent container overflow. Spills and overtopping require immediate attention.



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To prevent clogging of the storm drainage system, litter and debris removal from drainage grates, trash racks, and ditch lines should be a priority. Inspect trash and debris collection areas before and after wind and/or rain events to ensure that trash and debris are being adequately contained.

Planning and Design Criteria

Effective trash and debris management on construction sites is crucial for reducing environmental impact and maintaining regulatory compliance. Trash and Debris storage areas should be placed to minimize the exposure of building materials, building products, construction wastes, trash, landscape materials, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, detergents, sanitary waste, and other materials present on the site to stormwater. Include a designated debris storage area in the SWPPP and onsite drawings when such materials are anticipated. These areas are not to be near sensitive site features like streams, wetlands, sinkholes, flood-prone areas, wet weather conveyances, and drainage infrastructure. It can be helpful to incorporate preventative measures such as berms, dikes, or other means around storage areas to reduce stormwater runoff from contacting waste (CalTrans, 2017). It is best to enclose, cover, or equip all containers with lids to minimize exposure to rain (KYTC, 2015). It is helpful when signage clearly designates waste disposal areas. Collect and place onsite waste in disposal areas before rain events, regardless of if it was sourced from construction activities/personnel or not.

Toxic liquid wastes and chemicals, including oils, solvents, paints, acids, pesticides, and curing compounds, must not be disposed of in construction debris containers and should follow guidance outlined in Section 3.4.1. Construction debris and trash can only be used as fill if explicitly approved by regulatory authorities. Proper planning, consistent maintenance, and adherence to these guidelines ensure effective trash and debris management while protecting water quality and surrounding ecosystems.

Example Application

No formal design or quantities are required for this measure and therefore are not presented here.

References

CalTrans. (2017). *Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual*.

KTC. (2015). *Kentucky Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Field Guide*.

Roesner, L. A., & Kidner, E. M. (2007). Improved protocol for the classification and analysis of stormwater-borne solids. In *WEFTEC 2007* (pp. 5539-5566). Water Environment Federation.