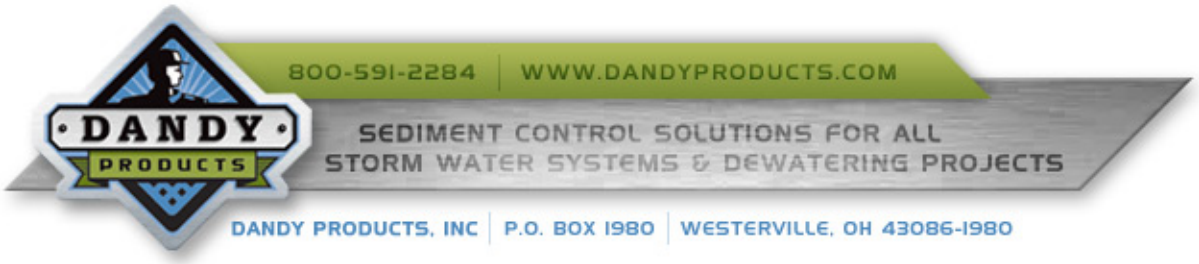


Construction Site Sediment Control... Simple Solutions to a Complex Challenge

by Dan Cleveland

Anyone dealing with construction site regulation compliance issues knows that it's not an easy job. Federal, state and local laws impact many facets of construction work, and keeping up with what seem to be constant changes can be overwhelming.

Compliance with the laws is vital, though, no matter how new they are. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) takes its job of enforcing laws very seriously, as evidenced on a page of its website listing companies that have made violations and the millions of dollars in fines they've received.

Of special concern on new construction projects is erosion and sediment control. Storm water runoff from construction sites carries with it enormous amounts of sediment and debris that, if allowed to enter waterways that feed into rivers, streams, lakes and oceans, will damage ecosystems and kill wildlife.

The Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1972 now includes regulations mandating sediment and erosion control solutions for every construction site affecting one or more acres of land, and smaller ones associated with larger developments or sales. Before the ground on their sites is disturbed in any way, operators of these sites must submit erosion and sediment control plans detailing the erosion and sediment control solutions they will use to prevent erosion and control sediment runoff.

In addition to the erosion and sediment control plan, each construction site operator also must submit a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) and obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction storm water permit prior to beginning any project. An SWPPP identifies every pollution source that could enter storm water runoff from a given site, and a detailed account of the actions that will be taken to control and filter sediment, thus keeping it and the pollutants out of waterways.

Developing Your Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan: A Guide for Construction Sites, details the steps that must be taken to develop and execute an SWPPP. This free handbook from the EPA includes an SWPPP template that can be customized by each site operator, a sample inspection form and two sample SWPPPs. It's applicable throughout the United States, in combination with state or EPA NPDES permits.

Though the NPDES is a federally regulated program, most states authorize their own NPDES permits. If work is being done in Alaska, Idaho, Massachusetts, New Hampshire or New Mexico, however, or on most tribal lands within the U.S., permits must be obtained from the EPA.

The Storm Water Resource Locator found on the Construction Industry Compliance Assistance Center's website is a valuable tool for construction site operators. Use it to find NPDES permit forms, SWPPP requirements, and regulations for erosion and sediment control and storm water management for each state.

Of course, following the laws regarding erosion and sediment control is even more important than understanding them, and the easiest way to ensure complete compliance is to rely on products and expertise provided by a company that has made meeting regulatory requirements its business.

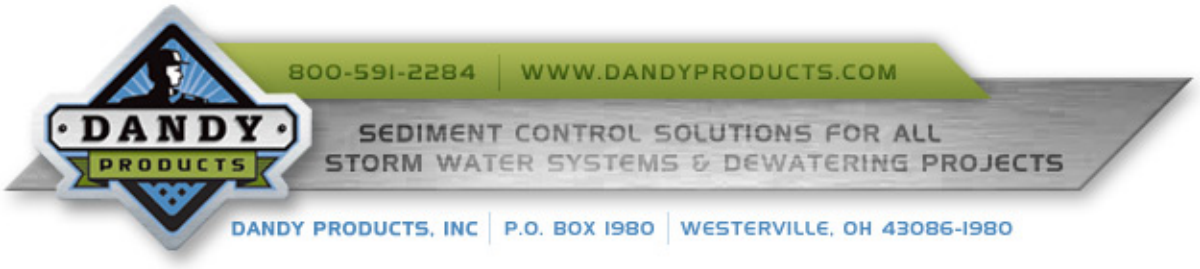
Erosion and sediment control professionals are available to help developers overcome even their most difficult site challenges, with know-how and products for every need. One call to a sediment control expert can save a company countless hours of research into the law and sediment control methods, not to mention thousands – if not millions – of dollars in fines if regulations are not met precisely.

Once professional sediment control products are on a construction site, they continue to save contractors time and money. They're made for quick installation, so they can be set up in minutes and then virtually forgotten about until runoff occurs.

Products are available that sit in front of curb inlets, within curb inlets, around and under storm grates, and more. All are made to allow storm water to pass into storm systems while filtering sediment and pollutants out.

After a rainfall or any type of watering has taken place, professional sediment control products can be inspected and cleaned out easily. Sediment and debris trapped within the products' filters are removed quickly, so the products can be reused time and time again, making them hassle-free and extremely cost efficient.

Finding a reputable, reliable sediment control company should be on any developer's "to do" list when planning a project. Utilizing the expertise of a company dedicated to sediment control saves construction professionals valuable time, countless dollars and unnecessary worry by helping ensure complete compliancy with complex laws from start to finish.



Source: