



SEDIMENT TASK FORCE

WHEN SEDIMENT ESCAPES



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



SWAN CANNING
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When Sediment Escapes

What to do if your subdivision or building activity is causing erosion or generating sediment

You must immediately report an incident that causes (or threatens to cause) harm to human health, the environment or property to your Local Government Authority.

You must also report incidents that breach your business's license, permit or subdivision or building approval conditions.

With fines of up to \$25,000 applicable depending on the breach, it is better to maintain a site incident report, and notify authorities as required, than respond to a complaint.

Dealing with complaints exposes the land developer or builder to legal liability, lost productivity, clean-up and repair costs.



The **builder or manager** has prime responsibility for controlling and supervising the construction operation including all site works.



The **site supervisor or foreman** is responsible for coordinating and establishing good practices on site.



The **individual trades** carry responsibility for their work and actions.



How to Respond

Neighbouring properties located adjacent to (particularly downhill from) your construction site are also at risk from poorly managed erosion and sediment control. Sediment escaping into the environment will affect the entire community.

If there is an erosion and sediment runoff incident or sand drift complaint about your site/business, respond by:

- identifying the source and where sediment is leaving the site.
- fixing the cause of the erosion and sediment runoff or sand drift.
- checking the rest of your site to eliminate or reduce all risks on your site to do with harm to human health and safety, property damage and water pollution from sediment runoff.
- sweeping up/cleaning up builders sand, soil, silt and mud and returning it to site. Do not hose it into the gutter or down the drain.
- keeping the people who made the complaint informed (where you can).

Useful Tips

Controls may fail due to lack of maintenance, poor implementation, or changing site conditions. Make sure the erosion and sediment controls you have put in place are effective and working as planned, by doing regular (at least weekly) maintenance and by checking during and immediately after rainfall and storm events.

Prepare your site for expected and unexpected weather conditions, and emergencies. Have the supplies you need on site and/or on-hand PRIOR to a weather event and for emergency maintenance.

Keep a log of erosion and sediment incidences and complaint details to help you identify the cause and improve your site management. Your log could include:

- complainant details (i.e., name, address, contact numbers) or incident description.
- date and time of day.
- wind direction.
- if it was raining and how heavy the rainfall was (e.g., light, medium, heavy, soil saturating, thunderstorm).
- what activities you were carrying out.
- how muddy did/does the water leaving your site look? (e.g., extremely muddy, very muddy, not too muddy, not muddy at all and somewhere in between).
- how much sediment you swept/cleaned up from the pavement or roads near your site - use a 10L bucket full of sediment as a guide for estimating. (Remember to place all sediment back on site).
- what you have done to fix the problem.

This information can be very useful to you in the event of significant sediment loss event, providing evidence of the management and control measures you have implemented on your site. Take photos for the record.

Remember it is recommended that all your erosion and sediment controls are in accordance with [International Erosion Control Association Australasia \(IECA\) best practice](#)

Further Information Including STF Builder's On-Site Checklist

[Perth NRM: Sediment Task Force](#)

[Master Builders Association](#)

[Housing industry Association \(WA\)](#)

[Your Home \(Australian Government\)](#)

[Healthy Land & Water](#)

[International Erosion Control Association \(Australasia\)](#)

For the Latest Innovations in Erosion and Sediment Control

[International Erosion Control Association \(Australasia\) - Environmental Excellence Awards](#)



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