

Sediment Basins



What is it?

Sediment basins are dams or ponds that capture sediment runoff from building and construction sites. They allow sediment to settle out and sink rather than be transported away with the runoff.

Sediment basins are formed by constructing an embankment of compacted soil at the lowest downstream point on the site and installing an outlet structure and overflow spillway. They are one of the most useful and cost-effective measures for treating sediment-laden runoff.

Why is it important?

Sediment generated from building and construction activities can be a major source of pollution to local waterways. Follow the practices discussed in this fact sheet and you will control sediment run-off from your site, meet your legal requirements and help protect our waterways.

Fact Sheet 17

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Before starting site works:

Sediment basins are typically required on large construction sites and subdivisions, or in areas of high seasonal rainfall. Sediment basins by no means trap all the sediment from a site. Therefore, sediment basins should be used in conjunction with other sediment and erosion control measures. Sediment basins should be constructed as a first step in any land disturbing activity and remain functional for as long as possible, ideally until the area contributing sediment is stabilised. Document the sediment basin on the Soil and Water Management Plan (if required) (**see Fact Sheet 3**). Detail on the plan how the basin will be maintained and decommissioned (if it is not a permanent on-site feature). Ensure that on-ground staff are aware of the need to maintain the sediment basin.

Design considerations:

Sediment basins require a considerable area to be effective. The two major factors determining the size of the basin are the settling velocity of the sediment and design flows in regards to rainfall. Sediment basins should be designed to cater for peak flow runoff from a design storm having an average reoccurrence interval of 10 years.

Sediment basins need to be positioned so if failure occurs they will not cause damage or nuisance to property, people or the environment. **Do not** install sediment basins on major drainage pathways. Locate sediment basins off-line and up-stream of the stormwater system, natural and constructed water bodies. Preferably construct basins at the lowest downstream point to intercept most of the runoff from the site. Access for machinery to remove sediment is crucial, as is an area designated for stockpiling the removed sediment so it can dry out (preferably with this water seeping back into the basin). The dried sediment can eventually be reused or disposed to landfill.

Installing the control measures:

For suitable sediment basin design refer to the procedures in Chapter 4 of the *Water Sensitive Urban Design – Engineering Procedures for Stormwater Management in Southern Tasmania*, available from the Derwent Estuary Program web page:

<http://www.derwentestuary.org.au/file.php?id=145>

Note: For larger sediment basins a civil engineer can be used. They can provide detailed drawings to follow construction. It is essential that the engineer review/check the specifications of the proposed sediment basin to ensure it is correctly sized and down-stream risks are addressed in the event of basin failure. Sediment basins over one megalitre may require a dams permit.

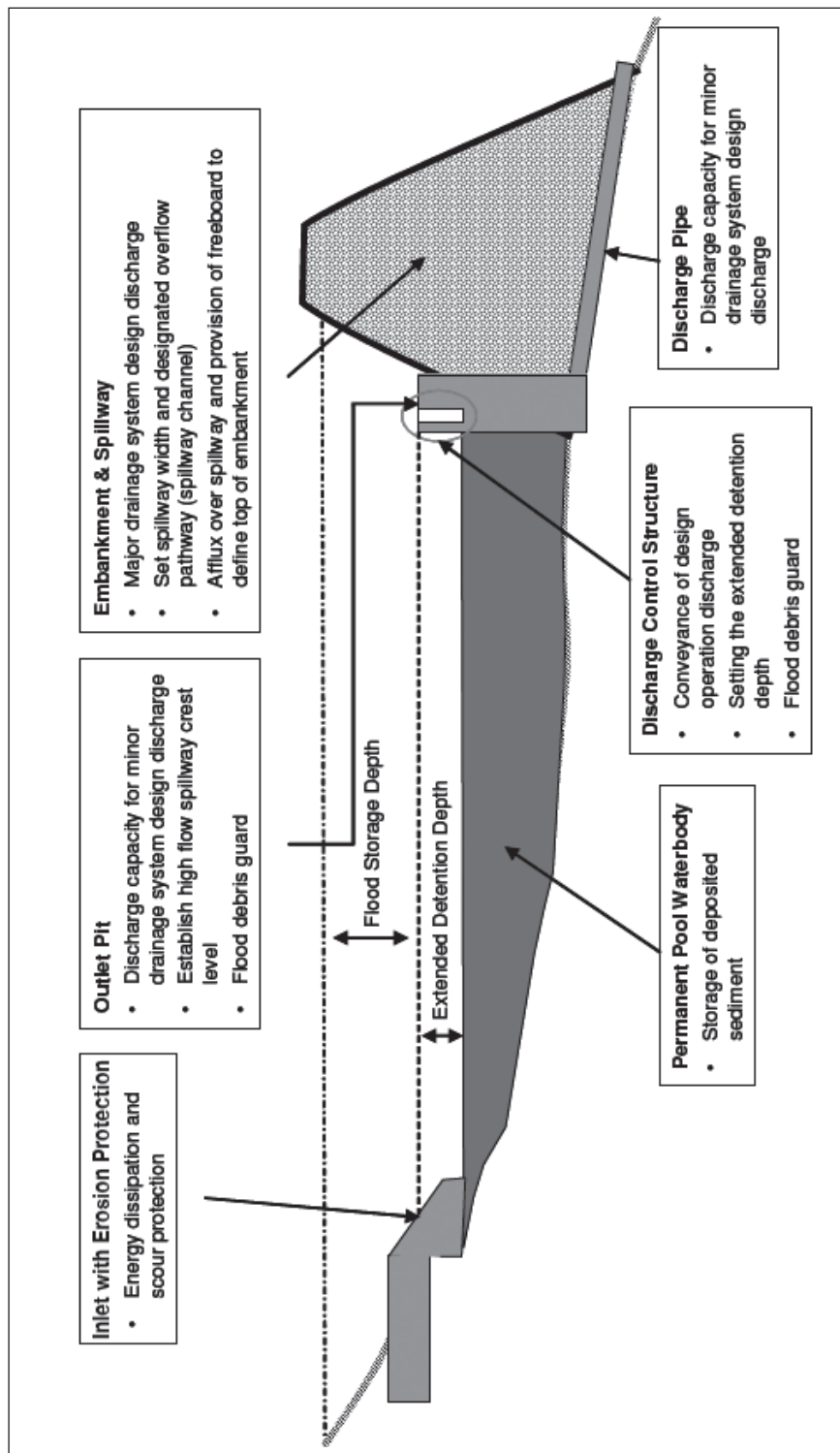


Figure 17A: Sediment basin.

Maintaining the control measures:

Sediment basins require regular inspection, especially after rain events and should be cleaned when more than half full of sediment. Litter and debris should be removed whenever observed in the sediment basin. If the water within the basin is cloudy and never clears, apply gypsum to allow the sediment to settle out.

List of fact sheets

1. Soil & Water Management on Large Building & Construction Sites
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 3. Soil & Water Management Plans
 4. Dispersive Soils – High Risk of Tunnel Erosion
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 6. Preserve Vegetation
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 15. Protection of Stormwater Pits
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- ### 17. Sediment Basins
18. Dust Control
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Remember:

Everyone working on building and construction sites has a responsibility to prevent pollution. If you do have an accident and pollution occurs you are required by law to notify the site supervisor. If the site supervisor cannot be contacted, workers should immediately notify the local council so they can work with you to minimise any harm to the environment.

Acknowledgement:

Figure 17A from Derwent Estuary Program 2006 "Water Sensitive Urban Design – Engineering Procedures for Stormwater Management in Southern Tasmania".

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