

# Protected Concrete, Brick & Tile Cutting



## What is this?

Concreting, bricklaying, brick and tile cutting must be conducted in such a way that ensures no waste products enter the stormwater system. If washed into the stormwater system, brick and tile cutting, concrete and mortar slurries will harden and block stormwater pipes and potentially cause flooding. Cement also raises the pH of waterways making it alkaline which is deadly to aquatic animals.

## 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 16

## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

### Before starting site works:

Find a location on the site away from stormwater pits and drains to undertake these activities, including mixing cement and mortar. This area should be large enough to contain all excess water, residues and waste.

Designate where associated building materials should be stockpiled, as this typically determines where this activity will occur. If the nature of the job requires cutting in a location close to stormwater pits or drains such as cutting a footpath then controls need to be put in place to ensure that no material enters the stormwater system. Identify site requirements and list them on the Soil and Water Management Plan (if required) (see **Fact Sheet 3**) before starting site works.

### Installing the control measures:

The designated brick or tile cutting area should have a diversion channel up-slope and sediment collection devices such as a sediment fence below it. If cutting in an area near a stormwater pit, use temporary collection devices such as filter socks, bunding or skirts suitably installed to direct the slurry onto a land area where it can soak into the earth. If this is not possible and the slurry is likely to flow to the stormwater system, filtering will be required. There are filtration systems available that work in the brick cutting machine with built in slurry containment systems, while for the kerb and gutter there are filter socks and for stormwater pits insert traps can be used (see **Fact Sheet 15**). The filtered water must not be cloudy when discharged to the stormwater system. Install a series of filtration systems for best results.

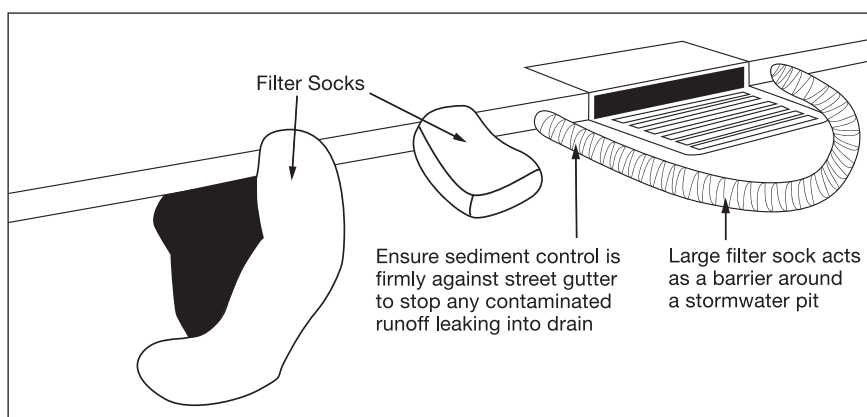


Figure 16A: Installing a series of filtration systems.

When equipment is washed down, use a designated wash-down area on-site e.g. wheel wash (**see Fact Sheet 13**). Waste concrete slurry can be safely disposed of by tipping small amounts into plastic or geotextile-lined ditches (**see Figure 16C**). This will enable the water to evaporate or soak in to the earth and the solids can then be disposed to landfill or reused as clean fill in construction or as road base.

### **Maintaining the control measures:**

All sediment control measures will require regular cleaning to maintain effectiveness and over time may need to be replaced. Remove the built up sediment and check for holes, other breaks, clogging and blockages in the control measures.

Shovel or vacuum concrete, brick or tile cutting slurry to an area well away from the stormwater system. **Do not** hose down. If there is no designated disposal area, place slurry into a 40 gallon drum that is half full of water. Solid materials will settle to the bottom of the drum for later disposal and the water can be reused when concreting.

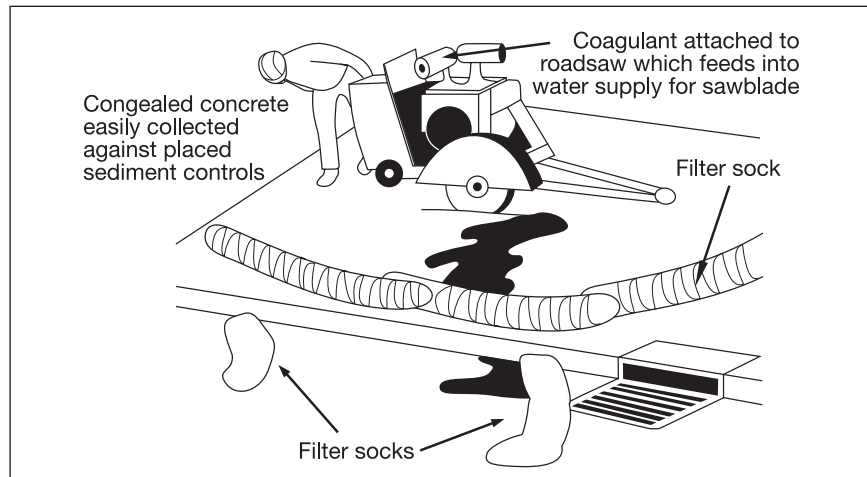


Figure 16B: Acceptable concrete slurry disposal method.

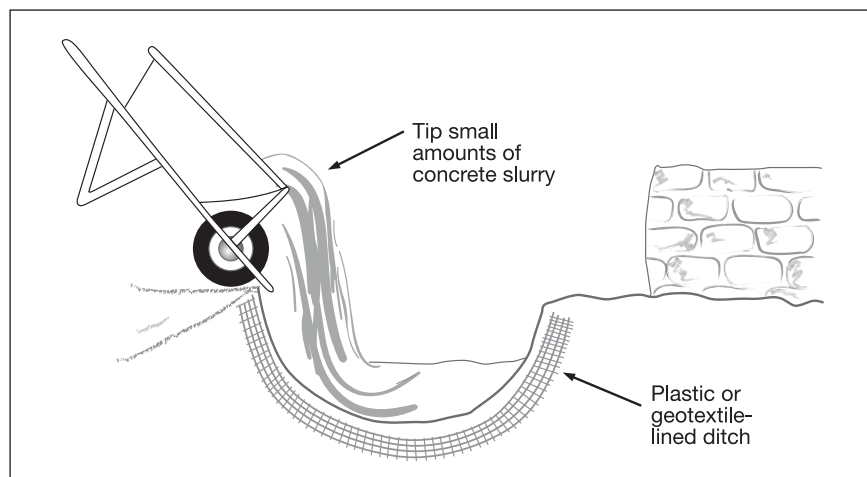


Figure 16C: Disposing concrete slurry into a lined ditch.

### **List of fact sheets**

1. Soil & Water Management on Large Building & Construction Sites
2. Soil & Water Management on Standard Building & Construction Sites
3. Soil & Water Management Plans
4. Dispersive Soils – High Risk of Tunnel Erosion
5. Minimise Soil Disturbance
6. Preserve Vegetation
7. Divert Up-slope Water
8. Erosion Control Mats & Blankets
9. Protect Service Trenches & Stockpiles
10. Early Roof Drainage Connection
11. Scour Protection – Stormwater Pipe Outfalls & Check Dams
12. Stabilised Site Access
13. Wheel Wash
14. Sediment Fences & Fibre Rolls
15. Protection of Stormwater Pits
- 16. Manage Concrete, Brick & Tile Cutting**
17. Sediment Basins
18. Dust Control
19. Site Revegetation

### **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:**

Figures 16A, 16B and 16C after NSW Department of Conservation 2004 "Environmental Best Management Practice Guideline for Concrete Contractors". Text in this brochure has been obtained and modified from the "Do It Right On Site" brochure series, kindly provided by the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils.

Date of Issue: December 2008