

PART 543 - MATERIALS

543.00 General.

A variety of materials are used to install NRCS assisted works of improvement. The quality of the materials used must be adequate to ensure satisfactory performance for the project's expected service life. The selection of materials shall include the public's health and welfare as a consideration.

543.01 Scope

The total cost of installing, operating, and maintaining a conservation practice and/or system should be compared to the benefits expected to be generated. All materials used must be compatible with site conditions, intended purpose, and normal expected O&M so that installations will provide satisfactory service to the owner.

543.02 Preparation of Material Specifications

(a) In the absence of standard material specifications, the preparation of project specific material specifications may be required. Industry is continuing to develop new materials and to improve on existing materials. The need to maintain our technical skills will include the incorporation of new methods and materials in the service provided by the NRCS.

(b) Special material specifications should describe the minimum physical, quality, and/or functional requirements expected of the product or material. The functional requirements may include minimum test data results necessary to conform to the specification. The inclusion of a material product by name or other similar type of identification should be avoided. If the product name is included, it should be specifically noted that the reference by product name is intended to establish minimum material requirements only and not intended to support and promote a specific company or product by name.

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543.03 Use of New Materials

(a) New materials are available for incorporation into conservation practices and project works of improvement. The decision to use a new material that may impact the cost or design life of a structure or practice shall be documented. Responsibility for the selection, evaluation, and decision to use a new material shall be as follows:

(1) Low and Intermediate Hazard Structures - The engineer with engineering design approval authority.

(2) High Hazard Structures - The State Conservation Engineer.

(b) When a new material may have regional or national applicability, an evaluation team should be assembled. The request for an evaluation team should be made by the State Conservation Engineer to the Regional Conservationist or Director of the Conservation Engineering Division, as appropriate. Evaluation teams shall make recommendations for the use of new materials, including any limitations or restrictions. Trial installations and monitoring plans may be recommended.

(c) It is important that information regarding the use of a new material be made available to others within NRCS and to agency partners. Dissemination of information shall be coordinated by the State Conservation Engineer, regional specialist, or the Director of the Conservation Engineering Division, as appropriate.