

Environment Protection Guidelines for Construction and Land Development in the ACT Factsheet

Environment Protection Authority

An updated version of the Environment Protection Guidelines for Land Development and Construction in the ACT (the Guidelines) has been released by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) after extensive review and consultation.

Suggested edits from stakeholders have been incorporated through discussions with technical experts and consideration of best practice guidance from industry and other jurisdictions.

Ensuring environment protection during land development and construction is vital to preserve the ACT's important ecosystems and waterways.

The Guidelines aim to minimise environmental risks associated with land development and construction activities and is an essential document for land developers, builders and anyone carrying out or supervising civil construction and building works.

The document's focus is primarily on erosion and sediment control, but also addresses noise and air emissions, waste management, land contamination, biodiversity and climate change. It highlights the risks involved in land development and construction activities and how to manage these risks to minimise potential harm to human health and the environment.

Key updates include:

- > Increasing sediment basin sizing and requirements when developing controls for storm events to account for more frequent and intense storms associated with climate forecasts.
- > Updating basin sizing requirements to recognise different soil types in the ACT and development locations outside urban waterway pollution controls (i.e., urban lakes and ponds), where greater capacity is

required to minimise risk of discharges directly to our natural river systems.

- > Highlighting offence provisions that apply for non-compliance throughout the document as specific reminders under each relevant section.
- > Introducing a risk-based framework for erosion and sediment control, in line with a preventive approach to minimise pollutants entering Territory waterways. This approach allows for enhanced management of projects with high risks, as well as appropriate expertise to be used and additional mitigation measures to be developed to manage risks that cannot be eliminated as part of the design.

The Guidelines highlights important sediment control measures, strategies, and principles, such as minimising the area of disturbance by staging works, clearly stating that progressive/staged approach is to be used in preference to mass clearing. It also emphasises the importance of incorporating and specifying staging of works in the Erosion and Sediment Control (ESC) Plan.

The document provides clear guidance on the approvals required for ESC Plans, maintenance of controls and site stabilisation requirements, as well as on site handover timing, requirements, and responsibilities. It also details outcome-based performance levels and standards relating to the control of sediment pollution and turbidity and requires stormwater assets to be offline and not connected until the site is fully stabilised.

i The new Guidelines can be found on the Access Canberra website.