

Best Management Practice (BMP) for Temporary Parking and Storage Areas (“YELLOW” LAND USE)

DRAFT: 02/19/2020

Purpose:

To protect soil from excessive compaction and degradation from low intensity, short term uses as a parking and/or storage area.

Where Practice Applies:

Portions of a preserved premises that are used primarily for agricultural production but may also occasionally be used for parking related to activities including, but not limited to, short term/seasonal public parking areas and short-term farm vehicle and/or equipment storage.

Definitions:

“Agricultural production” means the production of plants or animals useful to man, including but not limited to: forages or sod crops; grains and feed crops; dairy animals and dairy products; poultry and poultry products; livestock, including beef cattle, sheep, swine, horses, ponies, mules or goats, and including the breeding and grazing of any or all of such animals; bees and apiary products; fur animals; aquatic organisms as part of aquaculture; trees and forest products; fruits of all kinds, including grapes, nuts and berries; vegetables; nursery, floral, ornamental and greenhouse products; or any land devoted to and meeting the requirements and qualifications for payments or other compensation pursuant to a soil conservation program under an agency of the Federal Government. For purposes of this BMP, “agricultural production” shall mean growing crops directly in the soil profile. Land in agricultural production shall have soil loss less than or equal to “T” for the soils present and shall have a positive soil conditioning index (SCI).

“Coarse mulch” means wood chip mulch consisting of shredded leaves, bark, and wood particles ranging from 1 to 4 inches in length, with at least 50% of the mulch having a length of 2 inches or greater.

“Field moisture capacity” means the amount of water retained in a soil after it has been saturated and has drained freely. It is usually expressed as a percentage of the oven dry weight of the soil.

“Ground protection mats” means specifically designed construction mats consisting of wood, plastic, or metal that distribute heavy loads over a larger area to prevent soil compaction. Plywood is not acceptable to use as a ground protection mat.

“Improved parking area” means a parking area meeting the criteria set forth in the Improved Parking Area BMP.

“Long-term-use area” means an area used in part or in whole, as parking or equipment storage for a total of more than 30 days during a calendar year.

“Low intensity” means a short-term use area that maintains more than 70% vegetative cover or greater than 90% crop residue, or that is covered by four (4) to six (6) inches of coarse mulch while being utilized.

“Parking area” means an area on a farm used for vehicular parking or temporary storage of farm-related equipment that does not meet the definition of a travel lane.

“Parking Structure” means any fence, barrier, bollard, parking aid, traffic control device, or similar structure that is installed for long-term use, specifically structures that limit or prohibit normal harvesting or tillage activities. Temporary traffic control devices such as wooden stakes, fiberglass reflective rods, rope, and traffic cones which are installed only during a farm event and removed at the events’ completion are not considering parking structures. Agricultural fencing whose primary purpose is to contain livestock or exclude wildlife and generally follows the field perimeter is not considered a parking structure.

“Private agricultural use” means the storage or parking of farm-use vehicles and equipment, delivery vehicles, staff vehicles, or other similar equipment. In no case will private-agricultural use include parking of patrons or members of the public.

“Short-term use area” means an area, used in part or in whole as parking or equipment storage for a total of 30 days or less during a calendar year.

“Soil Loss Tolerance Rate (T)” means the maximum rate of annual soil loss that will permit crop productivity to be sustained economically and indefinitely on a given soil (source: American Society of Agronomy, Soil Science Society of America, Special Publication Number 45).

“Temporary parking area” means an agricultural field occasionally used for parking vehicles meeting the design criteria of low intensity and/or low duration set forth in this standard.

Design Criteria to Qualify for BMP Certification:

For all temporary parking and storage areas:

1. The use of temporary parking and storage areas shall be compliant with the deed of easement and applicable local and state regulations.
2. The primary use of the parking and storage area shall be for agricultural production or agricultural equipment storage.
3. No topsoil shall be removed or moved to accommodate use as temporary overflow parking.
4. Any area excavated or mechanically disturbed to a depth deeper than the plow layer shall not be eligible for BMP certification.
5. Mechanical soil compaction (e.g. with a sheep-foot compactor or vibratory compactor, or similar) prior to or during installation shall not be eligible for BMP certification.
6. Ground cover meeting the criteria for low intensity cover or ground protection mats shall be in place prior to use as a temporary parking area.
7. No parking structures shall be utilized, but temporary traffic control devices are encouraged to limit compaction to designated lanes.

In addition to the criteria above:

Low intensity, short term use areas (e.g. seasonal parking on a crop field):

1. Shall maintain low-intensity cover: minimum 70% coverage, or 90% crop residue, or four (4) to six (6) inches of coarse mulch for the duration of their use.
2. Shall not be used for more than 30 calendar days per year.
3. When used for public parking, individual parking stalls may be delineated using paint, markers, lime, or other suitable materials to control traffic and limit compaction to specific wheel tracks within the field. A traffic-flow pattern may be established to minimize the total area subjected to repeat compaction through the use of temporary rope barriers, parking cones, temporary signage, or similar traffic control devices.
4. Public parking shall take place only while soil moisture is at or below field moisture capacity.
5. Parking of vehicles other than for private agricultural use with a gross vehicle weight greater than 10,000 lb. does not qualify for Temporary Parking and Storage Areas BMP certification. Vehicles with a gross vehicle weight other than for private agricultural use between 5,000 lb. and 10,000 lb. shall be parked on improved parking areas or permanently disturbed areas when possible.
6. Shall have all coarse mulch removed from the area within as soon as reasonably practical, when soil is at or below field capacity or frozen. In all cases, care should be taken to avoid compaction during removal.
7. Coarse mulch shall not be incorporated into the soil unless specifically recommended in a Farm Conservation Plan approved by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
8. To avoid erosion, coarse-mulched areas shall be over-seeded, planted, or covered with appropriate agronomic mulches such as straw or leaves within one (1) week of coarse mulch removal.
9. All use of the temporary parking area shall maintain an annual soil loss at or below "T".
10. Shall not utilize permanent parking structures.

Low Intensity, long-term-use areas (e.g. private storage of infrequently used farm equipment, trailers, or personal recreational vehicles):

1. Long-term parking and storage areas used for storing infrequently used farm-related equipment and vehicles are not required to maintain vegetative cover beneath the equipment.
2. Establishment of woody vegetation shall be prevented through routine maintenance.
3. Shall not be available for public use.

Ground protection mats used for temporary parking and storage areas:

1. Shall be installed according to the manufacturer instructions.
2. Shall be inspected daily to ensure they are properly installed for the duration of their use. Should improper use be noted, use will be discontinued until appropriate repairs are made.
3. Shall be installed and removed in a way that minimizes soil compaction, such as installing a mat from a previously installed mat if equipment is being used during install.
4. The use of ground protection mats for more than 120 days in a calendar year does not qualify for Temporary Parking and Storage Areas BMP certification.

5. Within 30 days of the end of the use of the parking area it shall be restored to a condition suitable for agricultural production by reseeded, planting with cover-crop, mulching with straw, or other practices identified in the Farm Conservation Plan.

Maintenance:

For the duration of the use of the temporary parking area, the size of the area shall be limited to the minimum necessary to maintain compliance with this standard. Vegetative cover shall be maintained during use as a parking area unless ground protection mats are used. Designated lanes shall be maintained to limit soil compaction to the smallest necessary area. Care shall be taken to avoid contamination of the soil with high concentrations of fuel, agricultural chemicals, or other toxic substances that might affect future soil health.

Restoration:

If restoration of the area is desired, the restoration standards set forth in the Soil Protection Rules shall be followed.

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