



Tool Box Talk

Focus on Performance

Silt

Sust. 03

What?

Silt is water with a high concentration of clay or soil particles. It can have a devastating effect on river life.

Why?

Although silt is not always thought of as a cause of water pollution, it is responsible for about 6% of all water pollution incidents. Silt clogs the gills of fish and causes suffocation and starves the watercourse of oxygen.

How?

- Never pump out excavations directly into watercourses or drains. Use appropriate settlement or filtration techniques such as settlement tanks or lagoons, filter membranes or pump over a grassed area.
- Create buffer strips of grassed areas or cut-off trenches at the bottom of exposed soil slopes where there is a risk of silty run-off.
- Silty water may also contain chemicals, if this is suspected or known, do not discharge to watercourse or foul drains until agreement is in place from the Environment Agency (watercourses) or local water company (foul drains).
- Do not store excavated material close to a watercourse or drains to avoid escape of silty run-off during wet weather.
- Silty water can also block drains. Never pump silty water into surface water drains.
- Stop pumping activities if there are any signs of silt in watercourses.
- Report any sign of uncontrolled silt to your supervisor.



Questions

1. What do we mean by silt?
2. What is the problem with stacking excavated material too close to a watercourse?
3. How can we prevent silty water entering the watercourse?

If you have any queries regarding the content of this tool box talk please contact your Sustainability Advisor or Line Manager.