



Tool Box Talk

Focus on Performance

Soil Management

Sust. 28

What?

Careful management of soils is important to maximise opportunities for on site reuse. Poor management of soil may lead to its loss, damage or contamination .

Topsoil is essential for supporting the growth of plants and can be damaged by heavy machinery excavating it or running over it. Subsoil can be over-compacted through construction machinery running over it, causing waterlogging in winter and restriction to roots in summer.

Why?

Poor management and lack of planning increases the risk of good soil resources becoming damaged or sterilised. Reuse on or off site reduces costs and impacts associated with disposal to landfill.

Poor stockpiling or over-compaction of soil can damage its physical structure and nutrient contents and make it unusable, and steep sides increase risk of silty water run-off.

How?

- Make sure that vegetation has been killed or cleared before stripping starts.
- Strip topsoil and handle soils in the driest condition possible; don't strip soil during or after heavy rainfall.
- Keep stripping and haul vehicles to designated routes and wheeled vehicles off topsoil.
- Avoid removing topsoil underneath tree canopies where possible.
- Avoid mixing topsoil and subsoil and stockpile soils of different quality and composition separately.
- Where possible protect stockpiles from erosion by seeding or covering them.
- Use clear signage to identify stockpile contents.
- Locate stockpiles away from retained trees, drains, watercourses, excavations or the site of future excavations.
- Ensure wastes are not deposited on top of soil stockpiles to avoid contamination.
- Steepen stockpile sides beyond a slope of 1 in 1.75 (30°) in order to reduce the risk of erosion.
- Ensure topsoil stockpiles are no greater than 1.5 metres in height to preserve the soil structure.



Questions

1. Why should you avoid tracking over soil if possible?
2. Under what weather conditions should you avoid stripping soil?
3. What should be the maximum height of a topsoil stockpile?

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