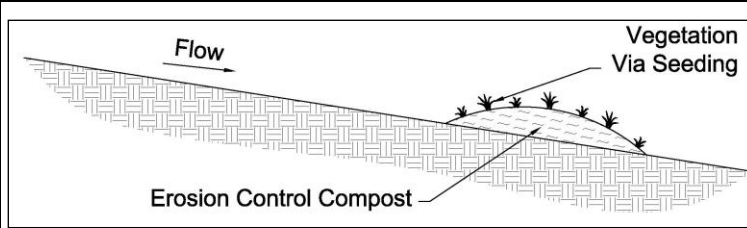


### 3.5 Organic Filter Berm

**Sediment Control**



**Description:** Organic filter berms, also called compost filter berms, are linear berms constructed of a mix of compost and wood chips. They are placed on a contour to control runoff. The organic filter berm provides both filtration and time for sediment settling by reducing the velocity of the runoff.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

**DESIGN CRITERIA:**

- Maximum drainage area of 0.25 acre per 100 linear feet of berm
- Maximum 200 feet distance of flow to silt fence; 50 feet if slope exceeds 10 percent
- 1½ to 3 feet high, top width of 2 to 3 feet, and base of 3 to 5 feet for trapezoidal shaped berms
- 1 to 2 feet high and 2 to 4 feet wide for windrow (triangular) berms

**ADVANTAGES / BENEFITS:**

- Economical means to trap sediment
- Most effective with coarse to silty soil types
- May be tilled into the soil at end of project, thus adding organic content to the soil

**DISADVANTAGES / LIMITATIONS:**

- Localized flooding due to minor ponding upslope of the filter berm
- Not for use in swales or low areas where berms will be subject to concentrated flow
- Can interfere with construction operations
- Repeated clogging may require replacement of berm with another control

**MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Inspect regularly
- Repair undercutting and other failures
- Remove sediment when before it reaches one-half the height of the berm
- Maintain dimensions of the berm by replacing organic filter material when necessary

**TARGETED POLLUTANTS**

- Sediment
- Nutrients & Toxic Materials
- Oil & Grease
- Floatable Materials
- Other Construction Wastes

**APPLICATIONS**

Perimeter Control
Slope Protection
Sediment Barrier

- Channel Protection
- Temporary Stabilization
- Final Stabilization
- Waste Management
- Housekeeping Practices

**Fe=0.50-0.75**

*(Depends on soil type)*

**IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS**

- Capital Costs
- Maintenance
- Training
- Suitability for Slopes > 5%

**Other Considerations**

- *Effects of ponding on adjacent areas and property*

### 3.5.1 Primary Use

Organic filter berms are used as perimeter controls down slope of disturbed areas and on side slopes where stormwater may runoff the area. They are very well suited to sites with small disturbed drainage areas that are not subjected to concentrated flows and that will ultimately be seeded, sodded, or landscaped.

### 3.5.2 Applications

Properly designed, the organic filter berm is economical due to the ease of installation and because it can be tilled into the soil at the end of project, limiting the cost of removal and adding to the organic content of the soil. The berms are used as perimeter control devices for both development sites and linear (roadway) type projects. They are most effective with coarse to silty soil types. Additional controls, such as a passive treatment system, may be needed to remove fine silts and clay soils suspended in stormwater.

### 3.5.3 Design Criteria

- Filter berms are to be constructed along a line of constant elevation (along a contour line) where possible.
- Berms can interfere with construction operations; therefore planning of access routes onto the site is critical.
- Maximum drainage area shall be 0.25 acre per 100 linear feet of filter berm.
- Maximum flow to any 20 foot section of filter berm shall be 1 cubic feet per second.
- Maximum distance of flow to berm shall be 200 feet or less. If the slope exceeds 10 percent the flow distance shall be less than 50 feet.
- Maximum slope adjacent to the filter berm shall be 4:1.
- Trapezoidal shaped berms should be 1½ to 3 feet high with a top width of 2 to 3 feet and a base of 3 to 6 feet wide.
- Windrow (triangular) shaped berms should be 1 to 2 feet high and 2 to 4 feet wide.
- Berm side slopes shall be 2:1 or flatter.
- Roughen the soil surface before placing the berm to increase adherence of the compost.
- Compost shall conform to the requirements for Erosion Control Compost in Item 161 of the Standard Specifications for Construction and Maintenance of Highways, Streets, and Bridges (TxDOT 2004).
- Organic filter berms should be stabilized by seeding if there are no other sediment controls down slope of the filter berm. Seeding shall be as specified in [Section 2.9 Vegetation](#) at a seed loading of 1 lb. per 10 linear feet for small berms (1ft. by 2 ft.) or 2.25 lbs per 10 linear ft. for larger berms (1.5 ft. by 3 ft.)

### 3.5.4 Design Guidance and Specifications

Specifications for Erosion Control Compost to be used as filter material may be found in Item 161 of the Standard Specifications for Construction and Maintenance of Highways, Streets, and Bridges (TxDOT 2004).

### 3.5.5 Inspection and Maintenance Requirements

Filter berms should be inspected regularly (at least as often as required by the TPDES Construction General Permit) for buildup of excess sediment, undercutting, and other failures. Silt must be removed

when before it reaches half the height of the berm. Silt may be raked from the disturbed side of the device to clean side the berm for the first few times that it becomes clogged to prevent ponding. Repeated clogging of the berm at one location will require replacement of the organic filter material or may require installation of another control to prevent failure of the berm.

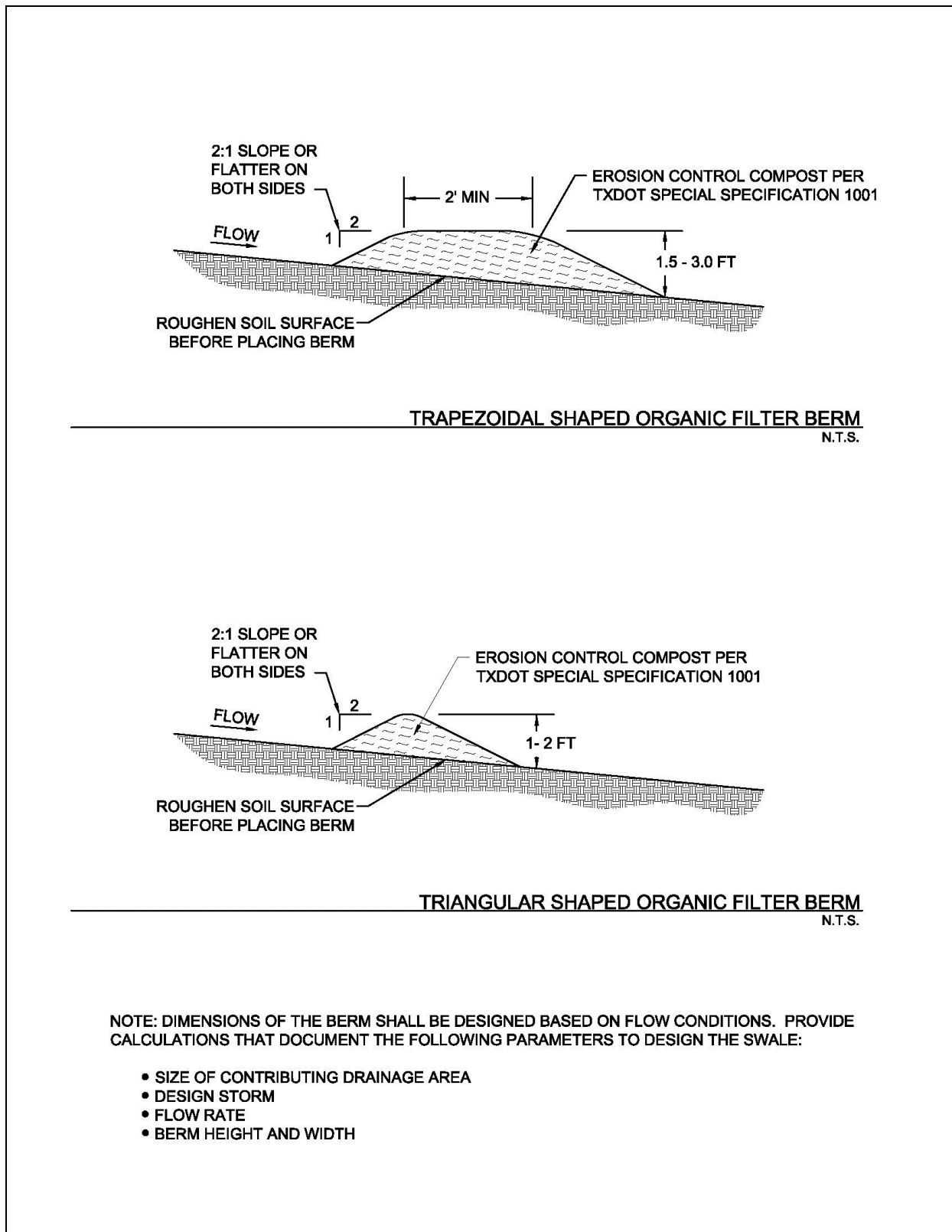
Dimensions of the berm must be maintained by replacing organic filter material when necessary. Typically excess material is stockpiled onsite for repairs to berms disturbed by construction activity.

There shall be no signs of erosion, breaching or runoff around or under the berm.

### **3.5.6** *Example Schematics*

The following schematics are example applications of the construction control. They are intended to assist in understanding the control's design and function.

The schematics are **not for construction**. They may serve as a starting point for creating a construction detail, but they must be site adapted by the designer. In addition, dimensions and notes appropriate for the application must be added by the designer.



**Figure 3.14 Schematics of Organic Filter Berm**