



Conservation Practice Overview

July 2022

Diversion (Code 362)

A channel usually constructed across the slope and with a supporting ridge on the lower side.

Practice Information

The primary purpose of a diversion is to direct excess water in a new direction for use or safe disposal. Uses include interception of concentrated water that is flowing down long slopes; collection of water for storage; diversion of water away from gullies, farmsteads, or animal waste systems; and supplementing water management on conservation cropping systems.



The design criteria for a diversion depend on its purpose. Diversions that divert water away from buildings, roads, or animal waste systems will be larger than ones used to protect agricultural land.

A diversion can be parabolic, V-shaped, or trapezoidal in cross section. The ridge located on the downhill side will typically be about 3 feet wide at the top and will have stable side slopes. The channel and ridge will be vegetated in most cases. If needed for erosion protection, the channel may be lined with gravel, concrete, or similar material.

The diversion must outlet into a stable channel such as a grassed waterway, a lined waterway, a grade stabilization structure, an underground outlet, or a stable watercourse. The location of a diversion is determined by outlet conditions, topography, land use, farming operations, and soil type.

Maintenance requirements include regular inspections, removal of sediment, repair and revegetation of eroded areas and outlets, and regrading the diversion to maintain the planned capacity.

Common Associated Practices

NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Diversion (Code 362) is commonly applied with other practices such as NRCS CPS Grassed Waterway (Code 412), Terrace (Code 600), Waste Storage Facility (Code 313), or Underground Outlet (Code 620).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.