

	WORK INSTRUCTION: Topsoil management and handling.		DOC # SHEQ-AR-001
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Method Statement: Topsoil Management and Handling

1. Scope of Work

This method statement outlines the processes and procedures for the safe and effective handling, removal, stockpiling, and preservation of topsoil during construction activities. It ensures that topsoil resources are managed in a way that allows for their reuse and maintains environmental integrity.

2. Objectives

- To safely and efficiently remove, handle, and stockpile topsoil.
- To preserve the quality of topsoil for future reinstatement or landscaping activities.
- To minimize environmental impact by reducing erosion, compaction, and contamination of topsoil.

3. Responsibilities

- **Project Manager:** Oversee the execution of this method statement and ensure compliance with environmental guidelines and local regulations.
- **Site Supervisor:** Supervise the handling, removal, and stockpiling of topsoil, ensuring adherence to the method statement.
- **Safety Officer:** Monitor safety practices, conduct regular inspections, and ensure proper use of PPE by all personnel involved in topsoil management.
- **Environmental Officer:** Ensure environmental compliance and monitor measures for topsoil preservation.

4. Plant and Equipment

The following plant and equipment will be used for topsoil management:

- Excavators
- Dump trucks or loaders
- Graders
- Bulldozers (if necessary for levelling stockpiles)
- Water tanker (for dust suppression)
- Silt fencing and erosion control materials

5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All personnel involved in topsoil handling must wear appropriate PPE, including:

- Safety boots
- High-visibility vests

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- Hard hats
- Gloves
- Safety goggles (if dust is a concern)

6. Method of Work

6.1 Pre-Removal Preparations

- **Survey and Marking:** Survey the area to assess the thickness of topsoil and identify any sensitive environmental areas.
- **Area Designation:** Define stockpile areas at least 20 meters from drainage channels, water bodies, or sensitive sites.
- **Erosion Control:** Install silt fences, sediment traps, or straw bales around designated areas to prevent sediment runoff.
- **Notification:** Inform all site personnel of topsoil management protocols and restricted areas around stockpiles.

6.2 Removal of Topsoil

- **Depth of Removal:** Remove the topsoil layer to a depth of approximately 150-300 mm or as specified by the project requirements.
- **Method of Removal:** Use excavators to carefully strip the topsoil, avoiding contamination with subsoil. Excavated topsoil will be directly loaded onto dump trucks for transport.
- **Protection of Soil Structure:** Minimize compaction by limiting machinery movement within topsoil areas and only use designated routes.

6.3 Transport and Stockpiling

- **Transport:** Use dump trucks to transport topsoil to designated stockpile locations. During transport, cover trucks with tarpaulins to prevent spillage and dust generation.
- **Stockpile Location:** Stockpile areas should be on level ground, away from drainage lines, and on previously designated ground, to reduce erosion risks.
- **Stockpile Height and Shape:** Ensure stockpiles do not exceed 2 meters in height to prevent soil compaction and aid in natural aeration.
- **Stockpile Preparation:** Use graders to shape the stockpile into a stable, flat-top mound, which aids in water dispersion and minimizes erosion.

6.4 Preservation of Stockpiled Topsoil

- **Erosion Control Measures:** Apply erosion control measures such as silt fences, straw bales, or sediment traps around the stockpile perimeter.
- **Moisture Retention:** Use mulch or geotextile coverings to retain moisture and prevent wind erosion on exposed soil.

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- **Vegetative Cover:** Where feasible, sow fast-growing grasses on the stockpile surface to stabilize the topsoil.
- **Regular Monitoring:** Inspect stockpiles regularly for signs of erosion or contamination. Apply additional covering or control measures as necessary.

7. Environmental Protection Measures

- Maintain a buffer zone around stockpile areas to prevent contamination.
- Conduct topsoil activities only during dry weather conditions to minimize erosion risks.
- Minimize machinery movement around stockpile areas to reduce soil compaction.

8. Safety and Risk Assessment

- **Dust Control:** Water down areas as required to prevent dust generation.
- **Traffic Management:** Implement designated routes for dump trucks and machinery to reduce site congestion and prevent accidents.
- **Hazard Identification:** Assess for potential slip, trip, or fall hazards around stockpile areas and access routes.
- **Monitoring of PPE Compliance:** Ensure that all personnel are wearing the correct PPE and are aware of safe practices in topsoil handling.

9. Monitoring and Inspection

- **Site Supervisor and Environmental Officer** will inspect stockpiles weekly to ensure compliance with erosion control and preservation measures.
- **Safety Officer** will conduct safety inspections of PPE usage, site traffic management, and ensure dust control measures are in place.

10. Emergency Procedures

In the event of heavy rains, halt topsoil handling activities immediately. Implement additional erosion control around stockpile areas to prevent runoff. After adverse weather conditions, assess stockpile stability and rectify any damage.

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