



# Erosion and Sediment Control

## Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change

**Erosion** is the gradual wearing away of the land surface by water, wind, ice and gravity.

**Sedimentation** is the transportation, deposition and accumulation of eroded soil particles (sediment).

You need to take great care when doing work that disturbs soil, especially when working in and near watercourses and wetlands. Human activities (e.g., construction, land excavation) that disturb soil can accelerate erosion and cause sediment releases to watercourses and wetlands by exposing soil to rain and flowing water. This can lead to harmful impacts including:



Loss of aquatic and wildlife habitat



Poor water quality  
(e.g., drinking water, agriculture, navigation, and recreation)



Damage to infrastructure  
(e.g., bridges and culverts)

Sediment releases are also a violation of the [Environment Act](#) and can result in enforcement action.

With proper planning you can help protect our environment and water quality.

## Erosion and Sediment Control Plans

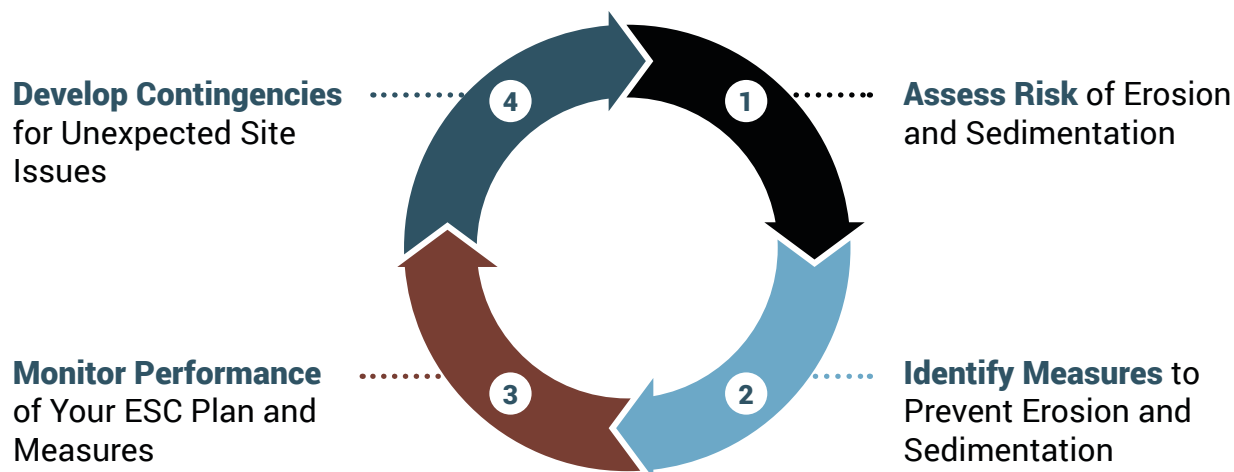
An erosion and sediment control (ESC) plan is an essential planning tool to help assess the risks of erosion and sediment release on your site so that you can implement the right control measure(s) to prevent sediment releases into the environment.

It is a good practice to prepare and implement an ESC plan for all activities that may cause erosion on site or sediment release to the environment, regardless of the type and complexity of the work. In certain circumstances, Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (NSECC) may require you to develop and submit a plan including:

- if you are applying for an approval for your work,
- as a requirement of a term and condition of your approval, or
- on the direction of an Environment Officer as part of an audit or response to a release of sediment.

To help you prepare your plan, NSECC developed the Guide to Developing Erosion and Sediment Control Plans <https://novascotia.ca/nse/surface.water/guidelines.asp>.

## Key Components of Erosion and Sediment Control Plans



ESC plans should be prepared by an ESC practitioner. These include designated professionals (e.g., professional engineer, or professional geoscientist) with specific expertise in ESC, a person with formal training in ESC, or a person who has sufficient ESC knowledge and experience. Retaining an ESC practitioner to develop an ESC plan demonstrates due diligence in environmental protection for anyone carrying out activities that expose soils.

## Additional Resources

The [Erosion and Sedimentation Control Handbook for Construction Sites](#) is a technical tool that contains information on ESC plan principles, technical guidelines for preparing ESC plan details and design of ESC measures.

### Duty to Report Release of Substance

On construction sites, a release of substance includes, but is not limited to, things such as petroleum products, like fuel and oils, and sediment. Site owners, contractors and Approval Holders have a duty to report releases under the [Environment Act](#) and regulations.

- To report releases of substances, contact your nearest NSECC Regional Office during daytime hours.
- After hours contact: 1-800-565-1633.