

## Description and Purpose

A temporary stream crossing is a temporary culvert, ford or bridge placed across a waterway to provide access for construction purposes for a period of less than one year. Temporary access crossings are not intended to maintain traffic for the public. The temporary access will eliminate erosion and downstream sedimentation caused by vehicles.

## Suitable Applications

Temporary stream crossings should be installed at all designated crossings of perennial and intermittent streams on the construction site, as well as for dry channels that may be significantly eroded by construction traffic.

Temporary streams crossings are installed at sites:

- Where appropriate permits have been secured (404 Permits, and 401 Certifications)
- Where construction equipment or vehicles need to frequently cross a waterway
- When alternate access routes impose significant constraints
- When crossing perennial streams or waterways causes significant erosion
- Where construction activities will not last longer than one year

## Categories

|    |  |                                     |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|
| EC | Erosion Control                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| SE | Sediment Control                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| TC | Tracking Control                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| WE | Wind Erosion Control                             |                                     |
| NS | Non-Stormwater Management Control                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| WM | Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control |                                     |

## Legend:

- Primary Objective**
- Secondary Objective**

## Targeted Constituents

|                |                                     |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sediment       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Nutrients      |                                     |
| Trash          |                                     |
| Metals         |                                     |
| Bacteria       |                                     |
| Oil and Grease |                                     |
| Organics       |                                     |

## Potential Alternatives

None

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- Where appropriate permits have been obtained for the stream crossing

## Limitations

The following limitations may apply:

- Installation and removal will usually disturb the waterway.
- Installation may require Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) 401 Certification, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit and approval by California Department of Fish and Game. If numerical-based water quality standards are mentioned in any of these and other related permits, testing and sampling may be required.
- Installation may require dewatering or temporary diversion of the stream. See NS-2, Dewatering Operations and NS-5, Clear Water Diversion.
- Installation may cause a constriction in the waterway, which can obstruct flood flow and cause flow backups or washouts. If improperly designed, flow backups can increase the pollutant load through washouts and scouring.
- Use of natural or other gravel in the stream for construction of Cellular Confinement System (CCS) ford crossing will be contingent upon approval by fisheries agencies.
- Ford crossings may degrade water quality due to contact with vehicles and equipment.
- May be expensive for a temporary improvement.
- Requires other BMPs to minimize soil disturbance during installation and removal.
- Fords should only be used in dry weather.

## Implementation

### General

The purpose of this BMP is to provide a safe, erosion-free access across a stream for construction equipment. Minimum standards and specifications for the design, construction, maintenance, and removal of the structure should be established by an engineer registered in California. Temporary stream crossings may be necessary to prevent construction equipment from causing erosion of the stream and tracking sediment and other pollutants into the stream.

Temporary stream crossings are used as access points to construction sites when other detour routes may be too long or burdensome for the construction equipment. Often heavy construction equipment must cross streams or creeks, and detour routes may impose too many constraints such as being too narrow or poor soil strength for the equipment loadings. Additionally, the contractor may find a temporary stream crossing more economical for light-duty vehicles to use for frequent crossings, and may have less environmental impact than construction of a temporary access road.

Location of the temporary stream crossing should address:

- Site selection where erosion potential is low.

- Areas where the side slopes from site runoff will not spill into the side slopes of the crossing.

The following types of temporary stream crossings should be considered:

- **Culverts** – A temporary culvert is effective in controlling erosion but will cause erosion during installation and removal. A temporary culvert can be easily constructed and allows for heavy equipment loads.
- **Fords** - Appropriate during the dry season in arid areas. Used on dry washes and ephemeral streams, and low-flow perennial streams. CCS, a type of ford crossing, is also appropriate for use in streams that would benefit from an influx of gravels. A temporary ford provides little sediment and erosion control and is ineffective in controlling erosion in the stream channel. A temporary ford is the least expensive stream crossing and allows for maximum load limits. It also offers very low maintenance. Fords are more appropriate during the dry ice season and in arid areas of California.
- **Bridges** - Appropriate for streams with high flow velocities, steep gradients and where temporary restrictions in the channel are not allowed.

## *Design*

During the long summer construction season in much of California, rainfall is infrequent and many streams are dry. Under these conditions, a temporary ford may be sufficient. A ford is not appropriate if construction will continue through the winter rainy season, if summer thunderstorms are likely, or if the stream flows during most of the year. Temporary culverts and bridges should then be considered and, if used, should be sized to pass a significant design storm (i.e., at least a 10-year storm). The temporary stream crossing should be protected against erosion, both to prevent excessive sedimentation in the stream and to prevent washout of the crossing.

Design and installation requires knowledge of stream flows and soil strength. Designs should be prepared under direction of, and approved by, a registered civil engineer and for bridges, a registered structural engineer. Both hydraulic and construction loading requirements should be considered with the following:

- Comply with any special requirements for culvert and bridge crossings, particularly if the temporary stream crossing will remain through the rainy season.
- Provide stability in the crossing and adjacent areas to withstand the design flow. The design flow and safety factor should be selected based on careful evaluation of the risks due to over topping, flow backups, or washout.
- Install sediment traps immediately downstream of crossings to capture sediments. See SE-3, Sediment Trap.
- Avoid oil or other potentially hazardous materials for surface treatment.
- Culverts are relatively easy to construct and able to support heavy equipment loads.
- Fords are the least expensive of the crossings, with maximum load limits.

- CCS crossing structures consist of clean, washed gravel and cellular confinement system blocks. CCS are appropriate for streams that would benefit from an influx of gravel; for example, salmonid streams, streams or rivers below reservoirs, and urban, channelized streams. Many urban stream systems are gravel-deprived due to human influences, such as dams, gravel mines, and concrete channels.
- CCS allow designers to use either angular or naturally occurring rounded gravel, because the cells provide the necessary structure and stability. In fact, natural gravel is optimal for this technique, because of the habitat improvement it will provide after removal of the CCS.
- A gravel depth of 6 to 12 in. for a CCS structure is sufficient to support most construction equipment.
- An advantage of a CCS crossing structure is that relatively little rock or gravel is needed, because the CCS provides the stability.
- Bridges are generally more expensive to design and construct, but provide the least disturbance of the streambed and constriction of the waterway flows.

## ***Construction and Use***

- Stabilize construction roadways, adjacent work area, and stream bottom against erosion.
- Construct during dry periods to minimize stream disturbance and reduce costs.
- Construct at or near the natural elevation of the streambed to prevent potential flooding upstream of the crossing.
- Install temporary erosion control BMPs in accordance with erosion control BMP fact sheets to minimize erosion of embankment into flow lines.
- Any temporary artificial obstruction placed within flowing water should only be built from material, such as clean gravel or sandbags, that will not introduce sediment or silt into the watercourse.
- Temporary water body crossings and encroachments should be constructed to minimize scour. Cobbles used for temporary water body crossings or encroachments should be clean, rounded river cobble.
- Vehicles and equipment should not be driven, operated, fueled, cleaned, maintained, or stored in the wet or dry portions of a water body where wetland vegetation, riparian vegetation, or aquatic organisms may be destroyed.
- The exterior of vehicles and equipment that will encroach on the water body within the project should be maintained free of grease, oil, fuel, and residues.
- Drip pans should be placed under all vehicles and equipment placed on docks, barges, or other structures over water bodies when the vehicle or equipment is planned to be idle for more than one hour.

- Disturbance or removal of vegetation should not exceed the minimum necessary to complete operations. Precautions should be taken to avoid damage to vegetation by people or equipment. Disturbed vegetation should be replaced with the appropriate soil stabilization measures.
- Riparian vegetation, when removed pursuant to the provisions of the work, should be cut off no lower than ground level to promote rapid re-growth. Access roads and work areas built over riparian vegetation should be covered by a sufficient layer of clean river run cobble to prevent damage to the underlying soil and root structure. The cobble must be removed upon completion of project activities.
- Conceptual temporary stream crossings are shown in the attached figures.

## Costs

Caltrans Construction Cost index for temporary bridge crossings is \$45-\$95/ft<sup>2</sup>.

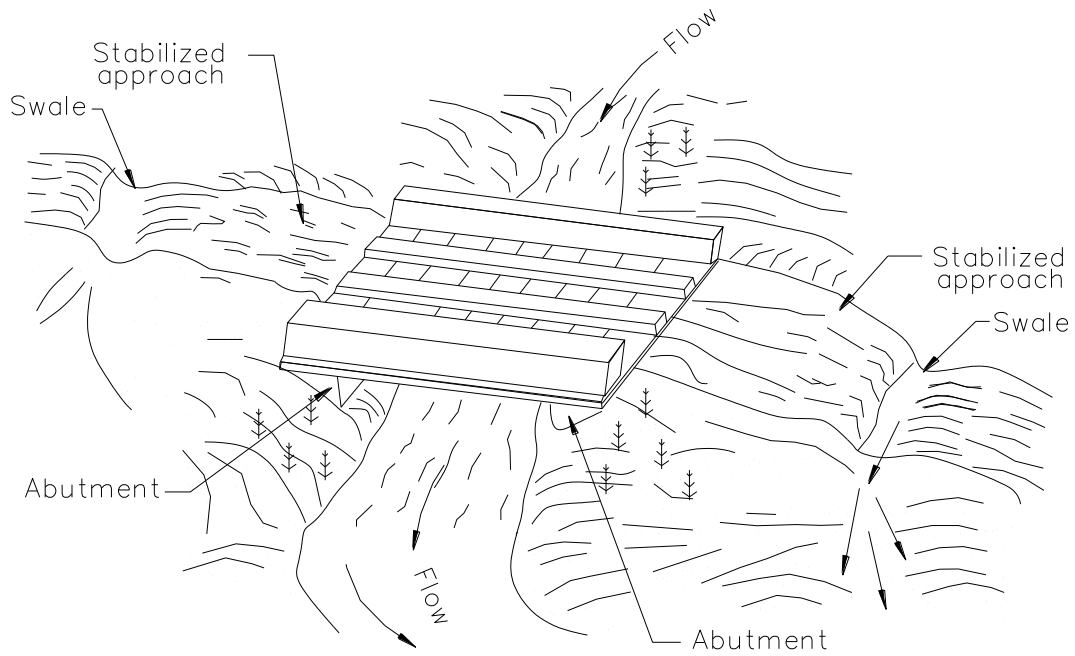
## Inspection and Maintenance

- Inspect and verify that activity-based BMPs are in place prior to the commencement of associated activities. While activities associated with the BMP are under way, inspect BMPs in accordance with General Permit requirements for the associated project type and risk level. It is recommended that at a minimum, BMPs be inspected weekly, prior to forecasted rain events, daily during extended rain events, and after the conclusion of rain events.
- Check for blockage in the channel, sediment buildup or trapped debris in culverts, blockage behind fords or under bridges.
- Check for erosion of abutments, channel scour, riprap displacement, or piping in the soil.
- Check for structural weakening of the temporary crossings, such as cracks, and undermining of foundations and abutments.
- Remove sediment that collects behind fords, in culverts, and under bridges periodically.
- Replace lost or displaced aggregate from inlets and outlets of culverts and cellular confinement systems.
- Remove temporary crossing promptly when it is no longer needed.

## References

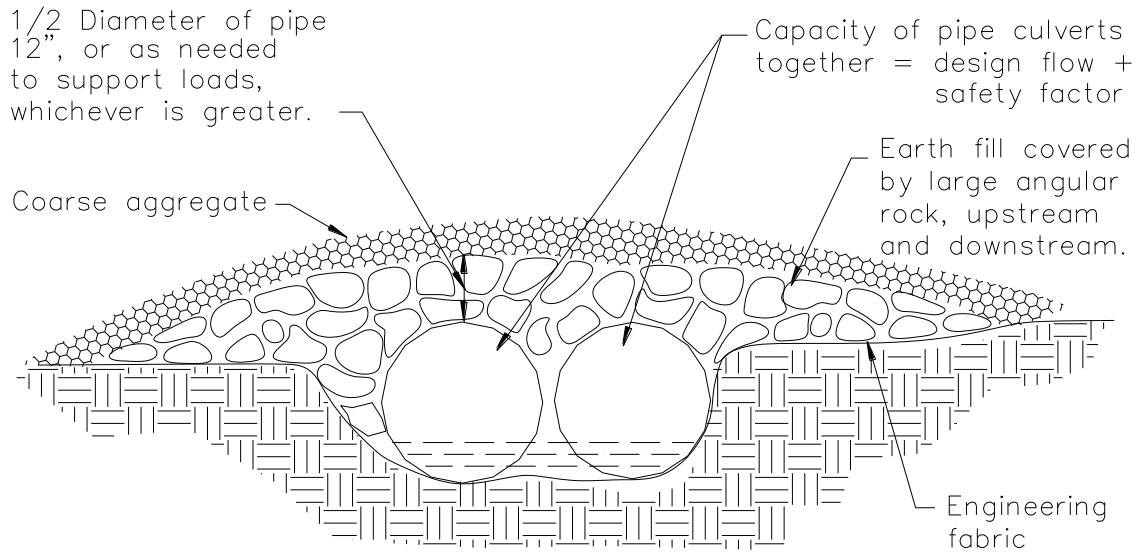
California Bank and Shore Rock Slope Protection Design – Practitioners Guide and Field Evaluations of Riprap Methods, Caltrans Study No. F90TLO3, October 2000.

Stormwater Quality Handbooks - Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMPs) Manual, State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), November 2000.

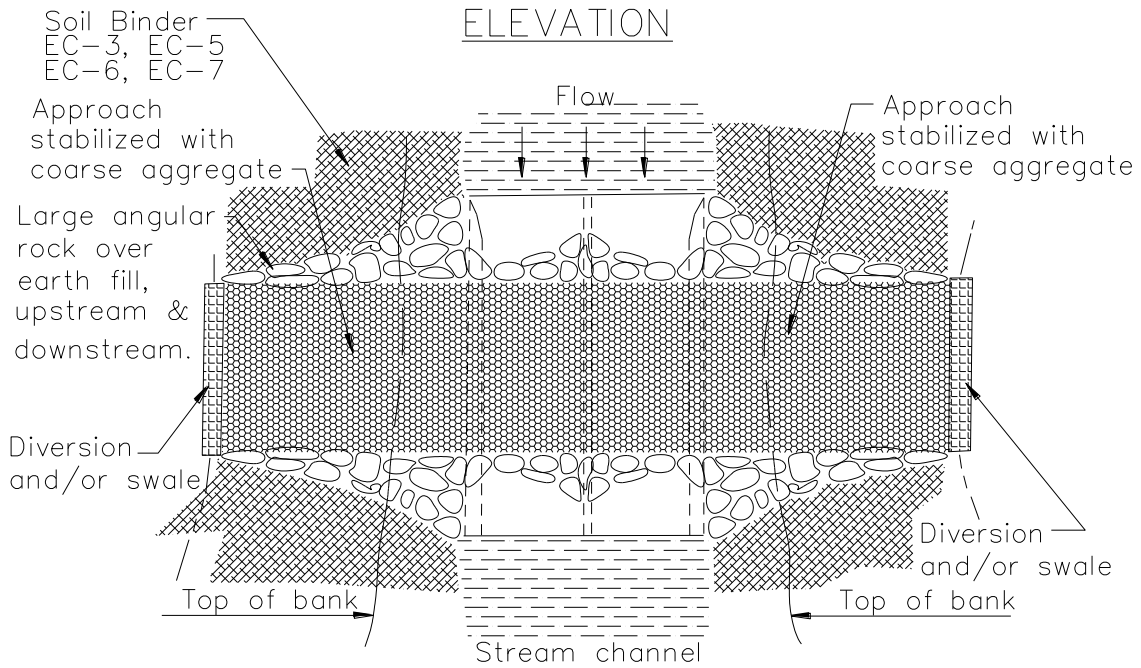


NOTE:  
Surface flow of road diverted  
by swale and/or dike.

TYPICAL BRIDGE CROSSING  
NOT TO SCALE

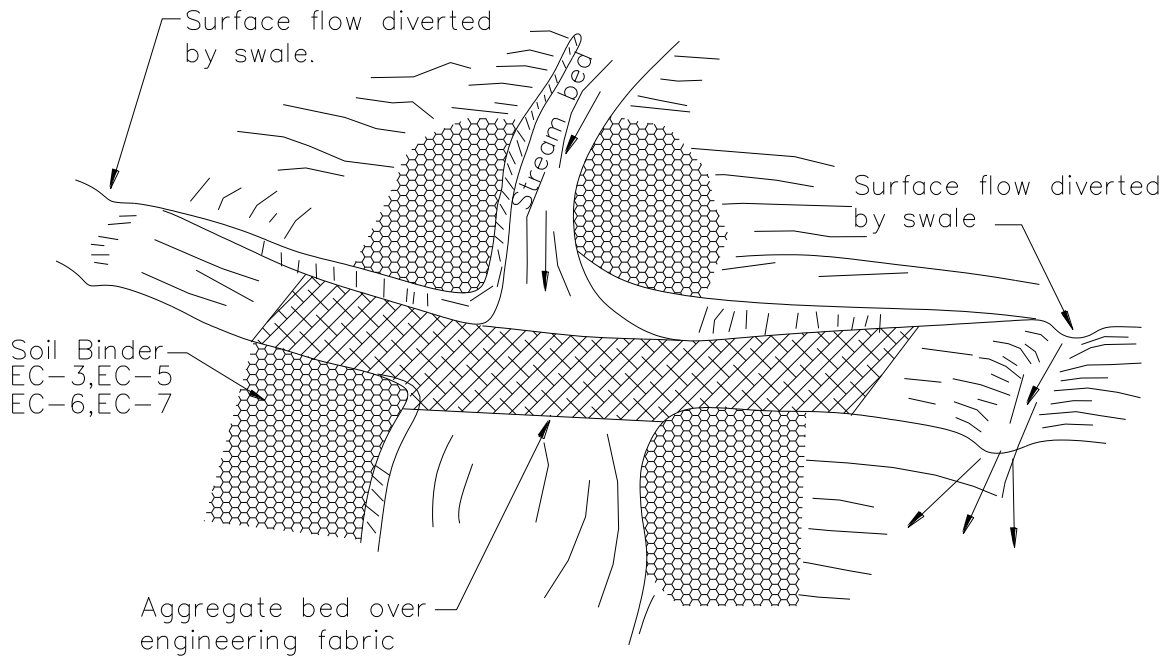


ELEVATION

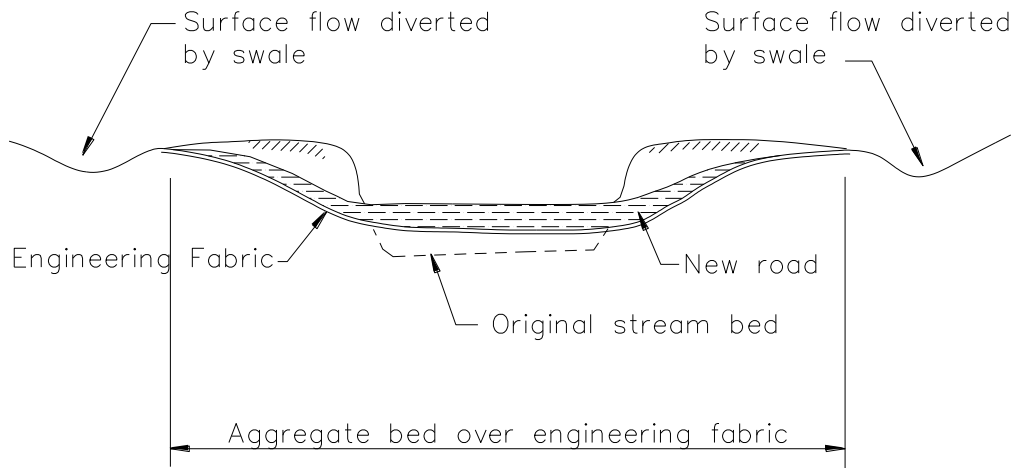


PLAN VIEW

TYPICAL CULVERT CROSSING  
NOT TO SCALE



Aggregate approach  
1:5 (V:H) Maximum slope on road



TYPICAL FORD CROSSING  
NOT TO SCALE