

Description

Temporary diversion methods are used to reroute water from a stream or restrict flows to a designated portion of the stream channel to allow for construction activities to take place in the stream, along the banks or beneath the active channel. Temporary diversion methods are often required during the construction of detention ponds, dams, in-stream grade control structures, utility installation and other activities, including maintenance, that require working in waterways. Temporary diversion methods include temporary diversion channels, pump-arounds, piped diversions, coffer dams and other similar practices. The primary purpose of all temporary diversion methods is to protect water quality by passing upstream flows around the active construction zone.



Photograph TDM-1. This coffer dam, installed to allow grading and stabilization of the stream bank, consists of concrete blocks covered by an impermeable liner held in place by sand bags.

Appropriate Uses

Temporary diversion methods are appropriate in situations when it is necessary to divert the flow around the area where work is being conducted. Temporary diversion methods vary with the size of the waterway that is being diverted.

For large streams, a temporary diversion may consist of berms or coffer dams constructed within the stream to confine flow to one side of the stream while work progresses on the “dry” side of the berm. For smaller streams and often for construction of dams and detention basins, a temporary diversion method may divert the entire waterway. For short duration projects (typically less than a month of active construction) with low baseflows, a pump and/or bypass pipe may serve as a temporary diversion. Whenever a temporary diversion is used, construction should be scheduled during drier times of the year (November through March) to the extent feasible, and construction in the waterway should progress as quickly as practical to reduce the risk of exceeding the temporary diversion capacity. Timing and duration of construction are primary considerations for determining the design flow most appropriate for a diversion. A sizing method that does not consider these variables is overly simplistic and can result in inflated project costs and land disturbances that provide little to no water quality benefit. Additionally, disturbing more area than necessary can result in increased erosion.

Temporary Diversion Channel	
Functions	
Erosion Control	Yes
Sediment Control	No
Site/Material Management	No

Temporary diversion method section and approach should occur on a project- and site-specific basis. For short duration projects (typically associated with maintenance of utilities and stream crossings and minor repairs to outfalls and eroded banks) constructed during dry times of the year, diversion construction can create greater disturbance and mobilization of sediment than all of the other earth disturbing activities of the project combined, and the cost of the diversion could be a significant percentage of the overall project cost. If it can be reasonably determined, based on area and duration of disturbance, that channel work will result in less disturbance and movement of sediment than would occur through installation of a temporary diversion, it is reasonable to exempt these activities from the requirement to construct a temporary diversion.

On the other end of the spectrum, a basis of design for a temporary diversion in excess of the methodology presented in this Fact Sheet may be appropriate for longer duration projects and/or projects where the consequences of exceeding diversion capacity are significant in terms of public safety, damage to infrastructure and property, environmental impacts, damage or delay to the project and other factors. In short, engineers should recognize that temporary diversions must be thoughtfully analyzed on a case-by-case basis, considering site-specific circumstances.

Design Considerations

Selection and design of temporary diversion methods should consider many factors, including:

- Will construction of a temporary diversion cause greater environmental impacts than if the project is constructed without a temporary diversion? This frequently applies to short duration, small scale projects associated with maintenance activities such as bank erosion repair, drop structure and pond maintenance, outfall improvements/repair and other limited construction activities.
- Size of stream, tributary watershed area and anticipated flow rates during construction. Special consideration should be given to large streams with large tributary areas with higher flow rates since the sizing methodology presented in this Fact Sheet is based on data from watersheds less than 20 square miles.
- Any special water quality or aquatic life conditions the waterway.
- Nature of surrounding land use, property ownership, and easements in the project area are important considerations in determining feasibility and methods for temporary diversions. For example, in a highly urbanized setting or an area with limited right-of-way, there may not be adequate space to construct a diversion channel.
- Seasonal variations in stream hydrology (baseflow vs. peak flow).
 - Irrigation flows: If an irrigation ditch enters the stream, it is recommended that the ditch company be contacted to confirm when flows from the ditch may be expected.
 - Weather (storm runoff): If diversions are constructed in summer months when thunderstorms and flash flooding can occur, contractors will need to track weather forecasts closely and provide additional protection when higher flows from runoff are anticipated. The UDFCD Alert System can be used for daily forecasts and to provide warnings for severe weather.
- Probability of flood flows exceeding diversion capacity and/or diversion failure. Consider the consequences of exceedance or failure such as:
 - Public safety
 - Environmental
 - Legal
 - Regulatory
 - Economic
 - Project disruption/delay
- Realistic estimation of project duration and time of year during which construction will occur.

- Comparison of the overall project costs to the temporary diversion costs (design and construction) and determining the costs and benefits of different diversion strategies relative to the protection that they provide.
- Permitting requirements for overall project and for diversion methods (United States Army Corps of Engineers, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Division of Water Resources, local governments, and others). Permit requirements and existing vegetative cover may limit the allowable area disturbance.
- Public safety aspects. For example, if a pipeline is being used, consideration should be given to public access and inlet protection.
- Legal considerations, which are a function of many different factors such as property ownership, history of localized flooding, or parties that will have interest in project.

Design and Installation

1. Determine if a diversion is appropriate based on appropriate uses and design considerations stated earlier. As noted, in some cases, constructing a project under wet conditions is preferable to constructing a temporary diversion to create dry conditions, especially if construction of the temporary diversion will require a significant amount of disturbance relative to the overall project.
2. Determine project duration.
 - “Long duration” projects are projects that last longer than three months and in many cases are Capital Improvement Projects or traditional land development projects.
 - “Short duration” projects are projects that are completed within one month or less and generally are associated with maintenance and repair activities.
 - “Interim duration” projects are projects that will last longer than one month but up to three months.
3. Determine the time of year in which construction will occur.
4. Gather necessary temporary diversion sizing parameters that may include tributary area, imperviousness, project duration safety factor, and seasonal sizing coefficient.
5. Apply applicable sizing methodology and perform necessary calculations (provided following this section). Use engineering judgment to determine if the temporary diversion design flow is adequate for the specific project.
6. Determine appropriate method of diversion. Follow the design steps for the selected method discussed below.
 - Channel Diversion – For smaller streams, construction of dams and detention basins, or as the site allows, a channel diversion may divert the entire waterway as illustrated in Figure TDM-1.

- Berm or Cofferdam – A berm or coffer dam is appropriate for streams of all sizes to confine flow to one side of the stream.
- Piped Diversion – A bypass pipe is generally appropriate for short duration projects with low baseflows.
- Pumped Diversion – A pumped diversion may be appropriate for short duration projects with low baseflows. It may also be the only option where space for the diversion is limited as shown in photograph TDM-2.

Selecting a Diversion Method

Selection of the appropriate diversion type is largely site specific. The best choice represents the most efficient method while keeping disturbance to a minimum.

7. Consider developing an emergency action plan, as a precaution, for rapidly removing equipment and materials with potential to contribute pollutants to runoff from the waterway in advance of imminent runoff with the potential to exceed diversion capacity. The emergency action plan should designate an individual who will be on the site throughout most of the construction project with the authority to order that work be halted and equipment and materials with potential to contribute to stormwater pollution be moved to high ground outside of the active channel. The emergency action plan should identify where equipment and materials removed from the channel will be stored temporarily during a runoff event that is expected to exceed temporary diversion capacity. The UDFCD Alert System and warnings of the potential for severe weather issued by UDFCD should be consulted daily during construction.

Channel Diversion

1. Use sizing methodology to determine temporary diversion design flow rate.
2. Determine channel slope based on existing and proposed site conditions.

Perform initial channel sizing calculations using Manning's Equation. Determine maximum permissible velocities based on lining material. Pay particular attention to diversion channel entrance, bends, transitions and downstream return to stream where scour forces may require greater protection. Unlined channels should not be used. Table TDM-1 gives Manning's "n" values for the most commonly used lining materials.

Because temporary diversion channels typically are not in service long enough to establish adequate vegetative lining, they must be designed to be stable for the design flow with the channel shear stress less than the critical tractive shear stress for the channel lining material.

3. Determine the channel geometry and check the capacity using Manning's Equation and the "n" value given in Table TDM-1. The steepest side slope allowable is two horizontal to one vertical (2:1), unless vertical walls are installed using sheet piling, concrete or stacked stone. Consideration for public access and safety should be accounted for when determining channel geometry.
4. Determine depth of flow. A maximum depth of 1-foot is allowed for flows less than 20 cfs and a maximum of 3 feet for flows less than 100 cfs. (Flows in excess of 100 cfs should be designed in accordance with the *Major Drainage* chapter in Volume 1). Provide a minimum of 0.5 feet of freeboard above the design water surface elevation.

Table TDM-1. Manning's n Values for Temporary Diversion Channel Design

Lining Material	Manning's n Depth = 0 to 1.0 ft	Manning's n Depth = 1.0 to 3.0 ft	Manning's n Depth = 3.0 to 5.0 ft
Plastic Membrane	0.011	0.010	0.009
Straw/Curled Wood Mats	0.035	0.025	0.020
Riprap, Type VL	0.070	0.045	0.035
Riprap, Type L	0.100	0.070	0.040
Riprap, Type M	0.125	0.075	0.045

Note: Use manufacturer's Manning's n when available. See the *Major Drainage* chapter of the USDCM for riprap gradation. Erosion protection should extend a minimum of 0.5 feet above the design water depth.

Berm or Cofferdam

For coffer dams or berms that are intended to isolate a portion of the stream from the work area steps 1-4 should be applied to the "wet" side of the coffer dam or berm.

1. Use sizing methodology to determine temporary diversion design flow rate.
2. Determine channel slope based on existing and proposed site conditions.
3. Perform initial channel sizing calculations using Manning's Equation. Determine maximum permissible velocities based on lining material. Because temporary diversion measures typically are not in service long enough to establish adequate vegetative lining, they must be designed to be stable for the design flow with the channel shear stress less than the critical tractive shear stress for the channel lining material. This stability criterion applies to the stream-side of berms when berms are used to isolate a work area within a stream.
4. Determine the channel geometry and check the capacity using Manning's Equation and the "n" value given in Table TDM-1. The steepest side slope allowable is two horizontal to one vertical (2:1), unless vertical walls are installed using sheet piling, concrete or stacked stone. Provide a minimum of 0.5 feet of freeboard above the design water surface elevation.

Piped Diversion

1. Use sizing methodology to determine temporary diversion design flow rate.
2. Size the pipe to accommodate the design flow using no more than 80 percent of the pipe full flow capacity. Select a Manning's n value based on the type of pipe material that will be used (concrete n = 0.013 [typ.], corrugated metal pipe n = 0.024 [typ.]).

Pumped Diversion

1. Use sizing methodology to determine temporary diversion design flow rate.
2. A backup pump (or pumps) with capacity equal to or greater than the diversion design flow rate should be on site and in good working order at all times.



Photograph TDM-2. Despite a relatively significant baseflow, a pumped diversion was selected for this Lakewood Gulch project due to a lack of space crossing Federal Boulevard. Photo courtesy of City and County of Denver.

Sizing Methodology

The methodology for sizing of temporary diversion methods was developed using baseflow observations and Crest Stage Indicator (CSI) peak flow data collected from 21 watersheds within the UDFCD boundary. These data were collected over extended periods of time (up to 31 years) and, as a result, provide a sound statistical basis for the sizing methodology.

Determine sizing procedure to use based on the project duration.

- “Long duration” projects last longer than three months and in many cases are Capital Improvement Projects or traditional land development projects.
- “Short duration” projects are completed within one month or less and generally are associated with maintenance and repair activities. For these projects, it is recommended that the temporary diversion be sized based on the statistics identified for baseflows (i.e., vs. peak flows) and be of sufficient size to convey a flow that has a less than 50% chance of being exceeded between November – March, including a project duration safety factor.
- “Interim duration” projects will last longer than one month but up to three months. In these projects, engineering judgment must be applied, drawing on sizing methods for “short duration” and “long duration” project criteria and the time of year of construction to develop a basis of design for the temporary diversion method that is appropriate for the project.

“Long duration” projects last longer than three months.

“Short duration” projects are completed within one month or less.

“Interim duration” projects last longer than one month and up to three months.

It is highly recommended that projects involving temporary diversions be constructed between November and March. If a short duration project requiring a temporary diversion must be conducted between April and October, the extended weather forecast should be evaluated to avoid periods of anticipated precipitation and a conservative safety factor should be applied. Additional protection may need to be provided for the site if higher flows from runoff are anticipated.

Sizing Procedure for Long Duration Projects (duration greater than three months)

1. Determine the tributary drainage area, A , in square miles.
2. Determine the watershed imperviousness (adjusted as appropriate for disconnected impervious area, see Chapter 3).
3. Determine the design peak flow rate according to Figure TDM-2. Note: For long duration projects, or where the consequences of diversion failure warrant, a larger design flow may be necessary, and/or a more detailed, site-specific hydrologic analysis.

Figure TDM-2 may be used to estimate the design discharge for the sizing of temporary diversion methods for projects exceeding three months in duration. The curves in this figure were originally developed using annual peak flow data collected from 17 watersheds within the UDFCD boundary and then updated in 2012 using annual peak flow data from 21 watersheds with CSI gages. These data were collected over extended periods of time (up to 31 years) and, as a result, provide a sound statistical basis for the figure. The data supporting Figure TDM-2 were taken during the high flood potential period of April through September.

Figure TDM-2 provides estimated 2-year peak flow rates with the upper 5% and lower 95% confidence limits shown and is based on watershed imperviousness for small waterways (25 square miles or less).¹ Because Figure TDM-2 was developed using data from small watersheds, it is not appropriate to extrapolate from this figure for larger, more complex watersheds. For larger waterways (e.g., South Platte River, Sand Creek, Bear Creek, etc.), including ones controlled by flood control reservoirs (e.g., Chatfield Dam, Cherry Creek Dam, etc.), site-specific hydrologic analysis and risk assessment will be necessary to evaluate the appropriate level of protection to be provided by the temporary diversion. For any size watershed, it is important that the designer understand watershed characteristics to determine applicability of the simplified method and how these characteristics influence the choice of diversion method. It is also important to recognize that larger floods can and do occur. It is the responsibility of the designer and the contractor to assess their risk of having the temporary diversion being exceeded and to evaluate the damages such an event may cause to the project, adjacent properties and others.

¹ There are a multitude of factors affecting rainfall-runoff response of a watershed in addition to impervious area. Other factors include soil types, total area, fraction of connected/disconnected impervious area, watershed shape, topography and many other factors). Figure TDM-2 provides a simplified design tool based on watershed imperviousness but should not be blindly relied upon without due consideration of other factors including those listed above and others.

Sizing Procedure for Short Duration Projects (one month or less of active construction)

1. Determine the tributary drainage area, *A*, in square miles.
2. Select a safety factor, *S*, based on project duration from Table TDM-2. Short duration projects have been broken down further into projects less than two weeks and projects from two weeks up to one month.
3. Select the sizing coefficient, *K*, corresponding to the month in which the project will occur (see Table TDM-2). For projects that span two months with different *K* values, use the greater of the two *K* values. For short duration projects that will occur during the traditionally dry period of the year (November through March) a *K* value of 0.2 is recommended. For short duration projects that will occur April through October, and wet weather is not predicted, a *K* value of 0.5 is recommended.

When a diversion is determined to be appropriate, safety factors and *K* values in Table TDM-2 are **minimum** recommended values. Depending on the many factors to consider in selecting and sizing a temporary diversion listed above, higher values for *K* and *S* may be appropriate.

Table TDM-2. Temporary Diversion Sizing Coefficients and Safety Factors for Short Duration Projects

Time of Year	Project Duration	Safety Factor, <i>S</i>	Temporary Diversion Sizing Coefficient, <i>K</i>
November - March	Less than 2 weeks	1.0	0.2
November - March	2 weeks to 1 month	1.5	0.2
April - October	Less than 2 weeks (during dry weather conditions)	1.0	0.5
April - October	2 weeks to 1 month	1.5	0.5

Note: *K* coefficients were developed from regression analysis of baseflow data from USGS Crest Stage Indicator (CSI) data to approximate flows that have a less than 50% chance of being exceeded between November - March.

4. Calculate the recommended temporary diversion design flow rate using equation TDM-1:

$$Q = S K A \tag{Equation TDM-1}$$

In which,

Q = temporary diversion design flow rate for short-duration projects (cfs).

S = safety factor coefficient from Table TDM-2 based on duration.

K = diversion sizing coefficient from Table TDM-2 based on seasonality.

A = tributary area (square miles).

Of course, if the observed condition at the construction site suggests a higher flow, this should be estimated and used instead.

Example of Short-Duration Temporary Diversion Sizing Methodology

Project Location: Goldsmith Gulch Downstream (north) of E. Cornell Avenue

Planned project will involve approximately 0.12 acres of disturbance for bank stabilization, which will be completed within two weeks during the November to March time period. Using StreamStats, the gross contributing watershed area was determined to be approximately 6.2 mi². Based on project duration and seasonal timing, Table TDM-2 yields S = 1.0, K = 0.2. Equation TDM-1 can be used to calculate the recommended diversion flow:

$$Q = S K A$$

$$Q = 1.0 \cdot 0.2 \cdot 6.2 \text{ mi}^2 = 1.2 \text{ cfs}$$

Had this been a larger restorative maintenance project that will last 4 weeks, but will be started and completed within the November through March period, application of Equation TDM-1 and the recommended safety factor suggest the following diversion design flow:

$$Q = S K A$$

$$Q = 1.5 \cdot 0.2 \cdot 6.2 \text{ mi}^2 = 1.9 \text{ cfs}$$

Sizing Procedure for Interim Duration Projects (longer than one month and up to three months)

When projects last longer than one month but up to three months, a combination of sizing methods should be applied. The recommended temporary diversion flow rate should be evaluated using both the sizing procedure for short duration projects as well as the sizing procedure for long duration projects. These calculated flow rates should be weighed in combination with site-specific factors to determine an appropriate design flow rate. Each site should be evaluated individually to determine factors that may affect the design flow choice. For example, the designer may select to use the more conservative design flow for an interim duration project occurring in July and August where a chance for wet weather is forecast and flooding or damage to the area surrounding the project is unacceptable.

Maintenance and Removal

Because temporary diversions are one of the most critical BMPs for work in waterways, they must be inspected and maintained frequently to remain in effective operating condition. Flow barriers should be inspected at the start and end of each workday and at any time that excess water is noted in dry work areas. For diversion channels, the diversion channel itself should be inspected for signs of erosion, and the lining should be repaired or replaced if there are signs of failure. Check armoring at the diversion return point to the waterway, and add additional armoring if erosion is noted.

Water should not be allowed to flow back through the natural stream until all construction is completed. After redirecting the flow through the natural channel, temporary diversion measures should be removed. For temporary diversion channels, lining materials should be removed, and the diversion channel should then be backfilled and stabilized. Points of tie-in to the natural channel should be protected with riprap sized

in accordance with the *Major Drainage* chapter in Volume 1.

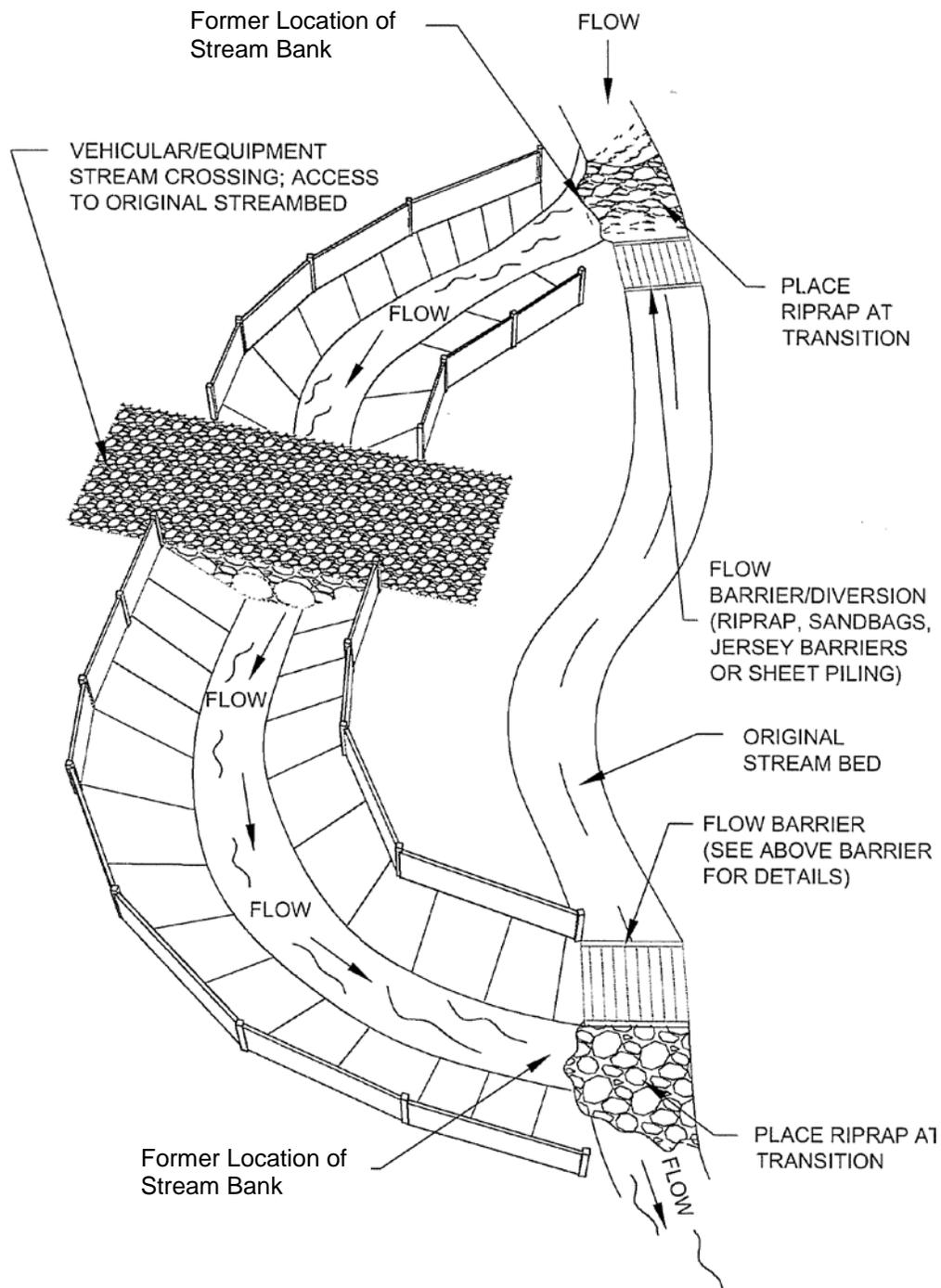


Figure TDM-1. Typical Temporary Diversion Channel

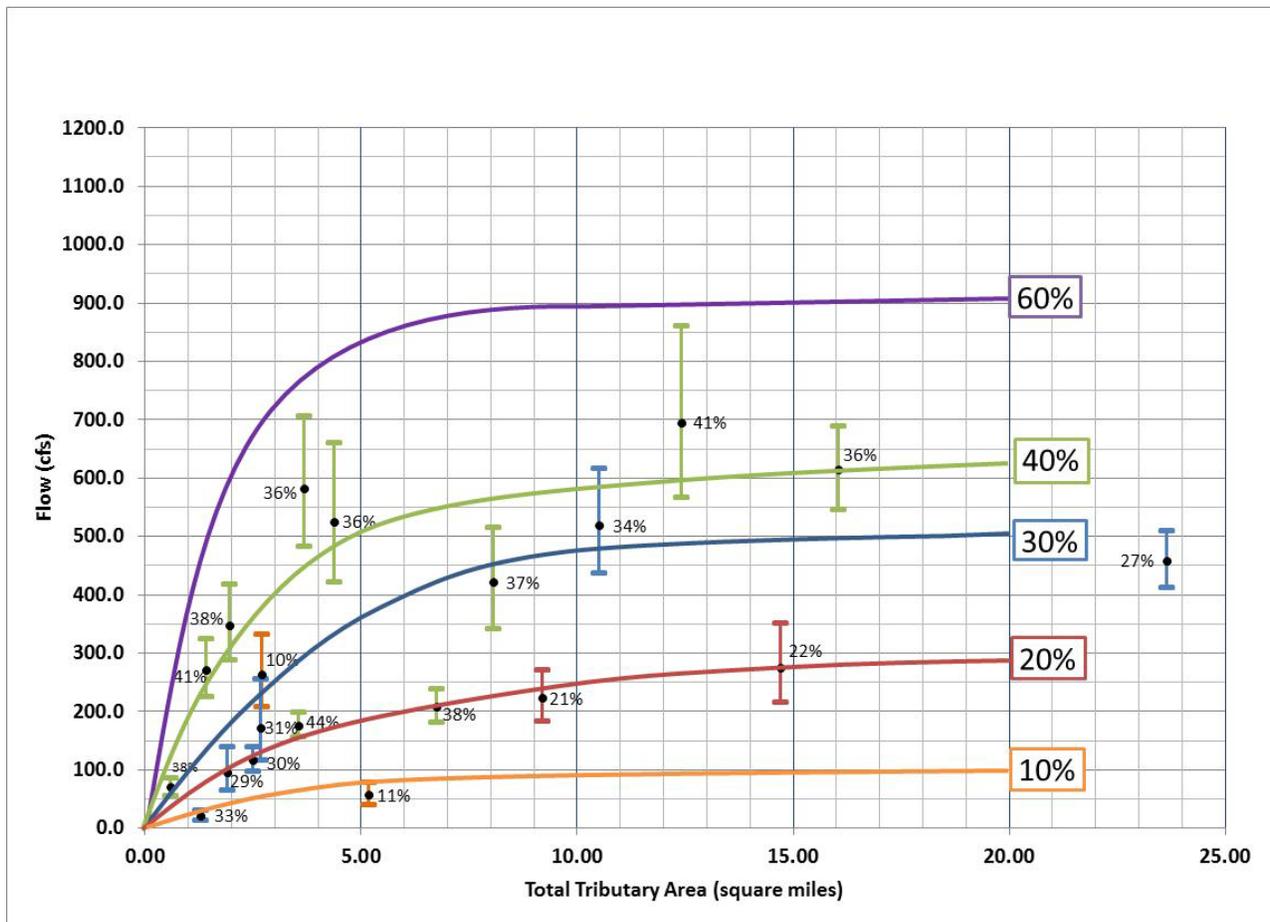
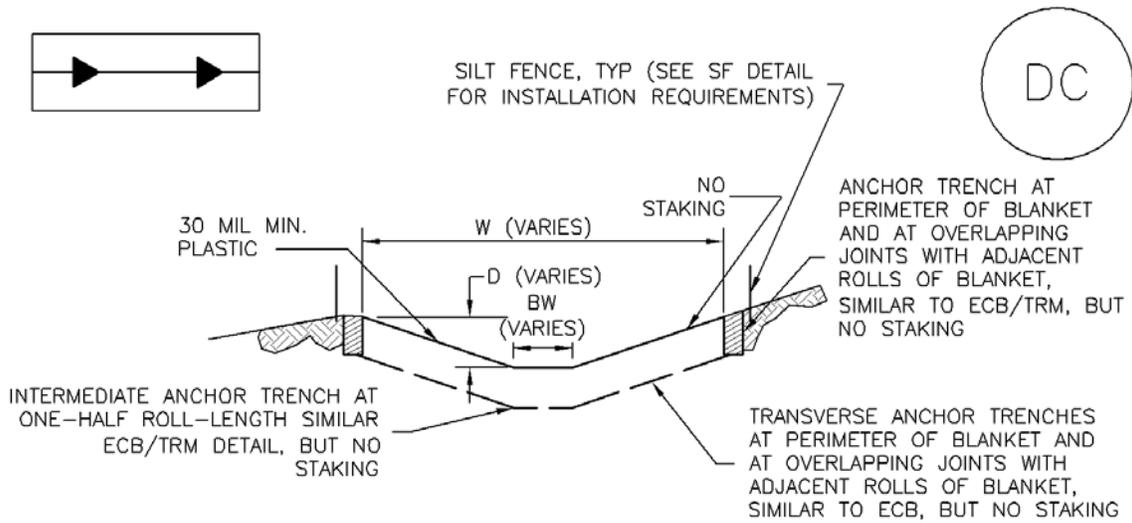
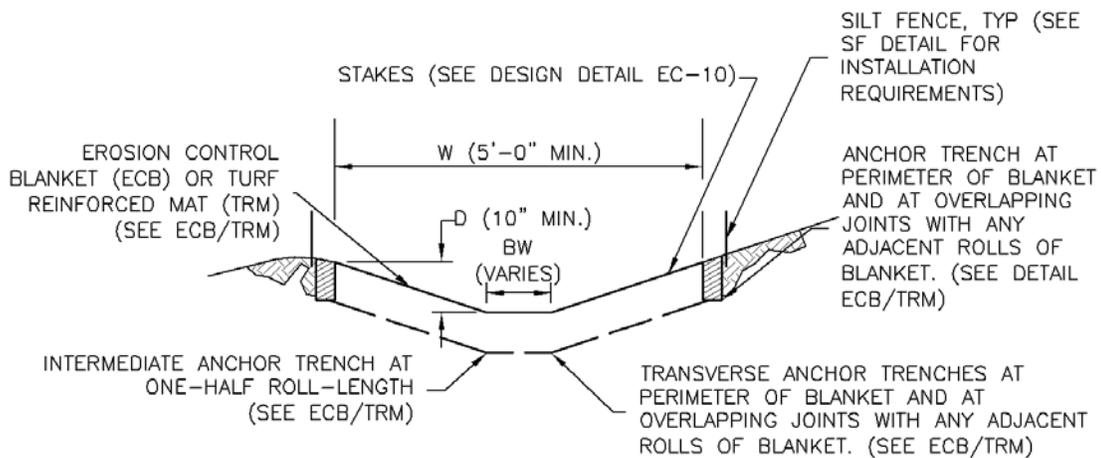


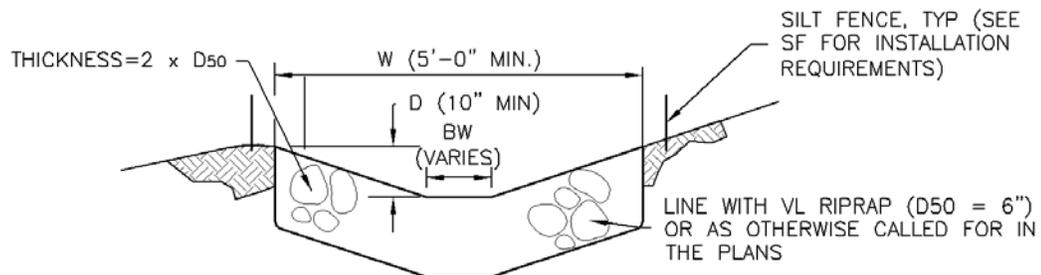
Figure TDM-2. Temporary Diversion Facility Sizing Nomograph for Long Duration Projects (Duration in excess of three months) Based on 2-year Peak Flows - Denver Metropolitan and Adjacent Areas, Updated April 2012



DC-1. PLASTIC LINED DIVERSION CHANNEL



DC-2. GEOTEXTILE OR MAT LINED DIVERSION CHANNEL



DC-3. RIPRAP LINED DIVERSION CHANNEL

CHANNEL DIVERSION INSTALLATION NOTES

1. SEE PLAN VIEW FOR:
 - LOCATION OF DIVERSION CHANNEL
 - TYPE OF CHANNEL (UNLINED, GEOTEXTILE OR MAT LINED, PLASTIC LINE, OR RIPRAP LINED).
 - LENGTH OF EACH TYPE OF CHANNEL.
 - DEPTH, D, WIDTH, W, AND BOTTOM WIDTH, BW.
 - FOR RIPRAP LINED CHANNEL, SIZE OF RIPRAP, D50, SHALL BE SHOWN ON PLANS.
2. SEE DRAINAGE PLANS FOR DETAILS OF PERMANENT CONVEYANCE FACILITIES.
3. DIVERSION CHANNELS INDICATED ON THE SWMP PLAN SHALL BE INSTALLED PRIOR TO WORK IN DOWNGRADIANT AREAS OR NATURAL CHANNELS.
4. FOR GEOTEXTILE OR MAT LINED CHANNELS, INSTALLATION OF GEOTEXTILE OR MAT SHALL CONFORM TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF DETAIL ECB, FOR PLASTIC LINED CHANNELS, INSTALLATION OF ANCHOR TRENCHES SHALL CONFORM TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF DETAIL ECB.
5. WHERE CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC MUST CROSS A DIVERSION CHANNEL, THE PERMITTEE SHALL INSTALL A TEMPORARY STREAM CROSSING CONFORMING TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF DETAIL TSC.

DIVERSION CHANNEL MAINTENANCE NOTES

1. INSPECT BMPs EACH WORKDAY, AND MAINTAIN THEM IN EFFECTIVE OPERATING CONDITION. MAINTENANCE OF BMPs SHOULD BE PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE. INSPECT BMPs AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (AND ALWAYS WITHIN 24 HOURS) FOLLOWING A STORM THAT CAUSES SURFACE EROSION, AND PERFORM NECESSARY MAINTENANCE.
2. FREQUENT OBSERVATIONS AND MAINTENANCE ARE NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN BMPs IN EFFECTIVE OPERATING CONDITION. INSPECTIONS AND CORRECTIVE MEASURES SHOULD BE DOCUMENTED THOROUGHLY.
3. WHERE BMPs HAVE FAILED, REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT SHOULD BE INITIATED UPON DISCOVERY OF THE FAILURE.
4. DIVERSION CHANNELS ARE TO REMAIN IN PLACE UNTIL WORK IN THE DOWNGRADIANT AREA OR NATURAL CHANNEL IS NO LONGER REQUIRED. IF APPROVED BY LOCAL JURISDICTION DIVERSION CHANNEL MAY BE LEFT IN PLACE.
5. IF DIVERSION CHANNELS ARE REMOVED, THE DISTURBED AREA SHALL BE COVERED WITH TOPSOIL, SEEDED AND MULCHED OR OTHERWISE STABILIZED IN A MANNER APPROVED BY LOCAL JURISDICTION.

(DETAILS ADAPTED FROM DOUGLAS COUNTY, COLORADO)

NOTE: MANY JURISDICTIONS HAVE BMP DETAILS THAT VARY FROM UDFCD STANDARD DETAILS. CONSULT WITH LOCAL JURISDICTIONS AS TO WHICH DETAIL SHOULD BE USED WHEN DIFFERENCES ARE NOTED.