

FACTSHEET

Ditching

Department of Fisheries and Oceans

CONDITIONS WHERE APPLICABLE

All roads require proper drainage in order to support traffic. The manner in which ditching is carried out not only affects drainage, but fish habitat as well.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Roadside ditches, particularly new ditches, can transport large volumes of silt and sediment. If this material is discharged into streams it adversely affects fish and other aquatic life.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

In order to avoid damage to fish habitat, the following measures should be implemented:

- Cross drainage culverts and take-off ditches should be incorporated to carry water away from the road and into the surrounding vegetation, where sediments can be filtered from the water.
- In addition to take-off ditches, road side ditches with long slopes may require checkdams to reduce flow velocity, control erosion, and prevent siltation of nearby streams.
- Where the topography does not permit the construction of take-off ditches, settling basins should be used to trap silt before it enters nearby streams.
- Where ditches have been excavated in areas with erosion prone soils, the ditches should be immediately lined with non-erodible material.



MAINTENANCE

- Maintenance of drainage ditches includes regular inspection and the removal of accumulated sediments.

REFERENCES

Anon. 1988. Erosion and Sediment Control - Handbook for Construction Sites. N.S. Dept. of the Environment.

Anon. 1990. Environmental Guidelines for Access Roads and Water Crossings. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 64p.

McCubbin, R.N. et al. 1990. (Revised) Resource Road Construction - Fish Habitat Protection Guidelines. DFO. 78p.

This Fact Sheet does not constitute DFO approval; other mitigative strategies may be required. The proponent is advised to contact all other appropriate regulatory agencies.

For more information contact the nearest
Department of Fisheries and Oceans office.

