

Minimum Separation Distances for Agricultural Activities

Protecting ground and surface water from contamination due to agricultural activities requires that sufficient distances be maintained between certain high risk activities and water resources. The table below lists the minimum separation distances from wells, watercourses and ditches.

Material	Activity	Minimum Separation Distances m (ft)		
		Wells	Watercourses	Ditches
Fuel	Storage	30 m (100 ft)	30 m (100 ft)	30 m (100 ft)
Fertilizer	Storage	Fertilizer should be stored in a covered building		
	Spreader loading	30 m (100 ft)	30 m (100 ft)	30 m (100 ft)
	Spreading	10 m (33 ft)	10 m (33 ft)	3 m (10 ft)
Pesticides	Storage	30 m (100 ft)	30 m (100 ft)	30 m (100 ft)
	Mixing	30 m (100 ft)	30 m (100 ft)	30 m (100 ft)
	Spraying (follow product label separation distances if applicable)	10 m (33 ft)	5 m (15 ft)	3 m (10 ft)
Manure	Storage	100 m (330 ft)	100 m (330 ft)	20 m (66 ft)
	Manure should only be spread between April 1 st and December 1 st OR on fields with slopes greater than 5% next to watercourses, between June 1 st and September 30 th			
	Spreading (clay to loam soils)	30 m (100 ft)	5 m (15 ft)	3 m (10 ft)
	Spreading (sandy soils)	60 m (200 ft)	5 m (15 ft)	3 m (10 ft)
Deadstock	Burial (under 60 cm of soil)	30 m (100 ft)	30 m (100 ft)	30 m (100 ft)

Agricultural Riparian Buffer Zones

Watercourses such as lakes, brooks and rivers are an important part of the agricultural landscape. They provide many benefits to us including water for livestock and irrigation, recreation (boating, fishing, swimming), and habitat for animals including species that are at risk (e.g. Atlantic salmon). In order to protect and improve watercourse health it is important that the impacts from agricultural activities are minimized.

The main threats from agricultural activities are from eroded soil, fertilizer nutrients, manures and pesticides. Establishing and/or maintaining riparian areas between farm land and watercourses can significantly reduce the amounts of these contaminants entering watercourses. The roots of riparian plants also hold the soil in place, reducing the risk of streambank erosion.

It is recommended that farm owners maintain a vegetated riparian zone with a minimum width of 5 m (15 ft) on either side of watercourses (Figure 1). Where livestock are present, fences should be installed to restrict access to the riparian zone to prevent damage to the banks and vegetation.

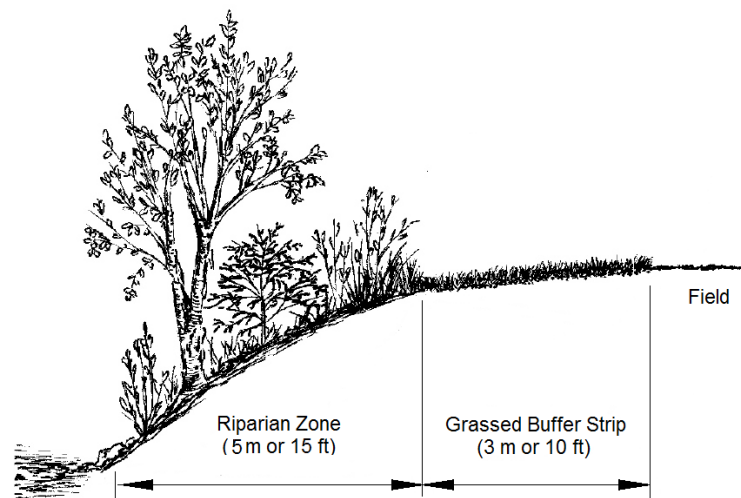


Figure 1: Riparian zone and grassed buffer strip widths¹

Where fields have exposed soil at any point during the year (e.g. row cropping), an additional grassed buffer strip with a minimum width of 3 m (10 ft) should be maintained to help filter eroded soil particles from run-off before entering the watercourse (Figure 1).

Resources:

- **Best Management Practices for Riparian Zones in Atlantic Canada** – Available from EFP website: <http://nsfa-fane.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/riparian-areas.pdf>
- **Biodiversity Landowner's Guide (BioLOG)** - <http://farmbiodiversity.ca/>
- **Homegrown Success Program** - funding for riparian zone establishment and livestock fencing is available: <http://novascotia.ca/agri/programs-and-services/financial-funding/growing-forward2/>
- **Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP)** - <http://www.annapolisriver.ca/>

¹ Image source: BioLog website <http://farmbiodiversity.ca/>