



Ohio Revised Code

Section 307.79 Administrative rules.

Effective: April 9, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 497

(A) The board of county commissioners may adopt, amend, and rescind rules establishing technically feasible and economically reasonable standards to achieve a level of management and conservation practices that will abate wind or water erosion of the soil or abate the degradation of the waters of the state by soil sediment in conjunction with land grading, excavating, filling, or other soil disturbing activities on land used or being developed for nonfarm commercial, industrial, residential, or other nonfarm purposes, and establish criteria for determination of the acceptability of those management and conservation practices. The rules shall be designed to implement the applicable areawide waste treatment management plan prepared under section 208 of the "Federal Water Pollution Control Act," 86 Stat. 816 (1972), 33 U.S.C.A. 1228, as amended, and to implement phase II of the storm water program of the national pollutant discharge elimination system established in 40 C.F.R. Part 122. The rules to implement phase II of the storm water program of the national pollutant discharge elimination system shall not be inconsistent with, more stringent than, or broader in scope than the rules or regulations adopted by the environmental protection agency under 40 C.F.R. Part 122. The rules adopted under this section shall not apply inside the limits of municipal corporations or the limits of townships with a limited home rule government that have adopted rules under section 504.21 of the Revised Code, to lands being used in a strip mine operation as defined in section 1513.01 of the Revised Code, or to land being used in a surface mine operation as defined in section 1514.01 of the Revised Code.

The rules adopted under this section may require persons to file plans governing erosion control, sediment control, and water management before clearing, grading, excavating, filling, or otherwise wholly or partially disturbing one or more contiguous acres of land owned by one person or operated as one development unit for the construction of nonfarm buildings, structures, utilities, recreational areas, or other similar nonfarm uses. If the rules require plans to be filed, the rules shall do all of the following:

- (1) Designate the board itself, its employees, or another agency or official to review and approve or disapprove the plans;



- (2) Establish procedures and criteria for the review and approval or disapproval of the plans;
- (3) Require the designated entity to issue a permit to a person for the clearing, grading, excavating, filling, or other project for which plans are approved and to deny a permit to a person whose plans have been disapproved;
- (4) Establish procedures for the issuance of the permits;
- (5) Establish procedures under which a person may appeal the denial of a permit.

Areas of less than one contiguous acre shall not be exempt from compliance with other provisions of this section or rules adopted under this section. The rules adopted under this section may impose reasonable filing fees for plan review, permit processing, and field inspections.

No permit or plan shall be required for a public highway, transportation, or drainage improvement or maintenance project undertaken by a government agency or political subdivision in accordance with a statement of its standard sediment control policies that is approved by the board or the chief of the division of soil and water resources in the department of natural resources.

(B) Rules or amendments may be adopted under this section only after public hearings at not fewer than two regular sessions of the board. The board of county commissioners shall cause, notice of the public hearings, including time, date, and place, to be published once a week for two weeks immediately preceding the hearings using at least one of the following methods:

- (1) In the print or digital edition of a newspaper of general circulation within the county;
- (2) On the official public notice web site established under section 125.182 of the Revised Code;
- (3) On the web site and social media account of the county.

The proposed rules or amendments shall be made available by the board to the public at the board office or other location indicated in the notice. The rules or amendments shall take effect on the



thirty-first day following the date of their adoption.

(C) The board of county commissioners may employ personnel to assist in the administration of this section and the rules adopted under it. The board also, if the action does not conflict with the rules, may delegate duties to review sediment control and water management plans to its employees, and may enter into agreements with one or more political subdivisions, other county officials, or other government agencies, in any combination, in order to obtain reviews and comments on plans governing erosion control, sediment control, and water management or to obtain other services for the administration of the rules adopted under this section.

(D) The board of county commissioners or any duly authorized representative of the board may, upon identification to the owner or person in charge, enter any land upon obtaining agreement with the owner, tenant, or manager of the land in order to determine whether there is compliance with the rules adopted under this section. If the board or its duly authorized representative is unable to obtain such an agreement, the board or representative may apply for, and a judge of the court of common pleas for the county where the land is located may issue, an appropriate inspection warrant as necessary to achieve the purposes of this chapter.

(E)(1) If the board of county commissioners or its duly authorized representative determines that a violation of the rules adopted under this section exists, the board or representative may issue an immediate stop work order if the violator failed to obtain any federal, state, or local permit necessary for sediment and erosion control, earth movement, clearing, or cut and fill activity. In addition, if the board or representative determines such a rule violation exists, regardless of whether or not the violator has obtained the proper permits, the board or representative may authorize the issuance of a notice of violation. If, after a period of not less than thirty days has elapsed following the issuance of the notice of violation, the violation continues, the board or its duly authorized representative shall issue a second notice of violation. Except as provided in division (E)(3) of this section, if, after a period of not less than fifteen days has elapsed following the issuance of the second notice of violation, the violation continues, the board or its duly authorized representative may issue a stop work order after first obtaining the written approval of the prosecuting attorney of the county if, in the opinion of the prosecuting attorney, the violation is egregious.

Once a stop work order is issued, the board or its duly authorized representative shall request, in



writing, the prosecuting attorney of the county to seek an injunction or other appropriate relief in the court of common pleas to abate excessive erosion or sedimentation and secure compliance with the rules adopted under this section. If the prosecuting attorney seeks an injunction or other appropriate relief, then, in granting relief, the court of common pleas may order the construction of sediment control improvements or implementation of other control measures and may assess a civil fine of not less than one hundred or more than five hundred dollars. Each day of violation of a rule or stop work order issued under this section shall be considered a separate violation subject to a civil fine.

(2) The person to whom a stop work order is issued under this section may appeal the order to the court of common pleas of the county in which it was issued, seeking any equitable or other appropriate relief from that order.

(3) No stop work order shall be issued under this section against any public highway, transportation, or drainage improvement or maintenance project undertaken by a government agency or political subdivision in accordance with a statement of its standard sediment control policies that is approved by the board or the chief of the division of soil and water resources in the department of natural resources.

(F) No person shall violate any rule adopted or order issued under this section. Notwithstanding division (E) of this section, if the board of county commissioners determines that a violation of any rule adopted or administrative order issued under this section exists, the board may request, in writing, the prosecuting attorney of the county to seek an injunction or other appropriate relief in the court of common pleas to abate excessive erosion or sedimentation and secure compliance with the rules or order. In granting relief, the court of common pleas may order the construction of sediment control improvements or implementation of other control measures and may assess a civil fine of not less than one hundred or more than five hundred dollars. Each day of violation of a rule adopted or administrative order issued under this section shall be considered a separate violation subject to a civil fine.