



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Conservation Practice Overview

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Surface Drain, Main or Lateral (Code 608)

A surface drain, main or lateral is an open drainage ditch constructed to a designed size and grade that receives drainage waters from other drainage structures.

Practice Information

The purposes of a main or lateral drainage ditch are to—

- To convey excess surface or shallow subsurface water from a field ditch to a safe outlet.
- To convey excess subsurface water from a subsurface drain(s) to a safe outlet.



Sites for this practice are suitable for agriculture and have an outlet for the drainage water by either gravity or pumping.

This practice applies to ditches for disposal of surface and subsurface drainage water collected primarily by field ditches and subsurface drains. A surface drain, main or lateral will require maintenance over the expected life of the practice.

Common Associated Practices

NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Surface Drain, Main or Lateral (Code 608) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as CPSs Surface Drain, Field Ditch (Code 607), Subsurface Drain (Code 606), Nutrient Management (Code 590), Integrated Pest Management (Code 595), and Critical Area Planting (Code 342).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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