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भारतीय मानक मसौदा

नदीय तटबंधों का निर्माण और रखरखाव – दिशानिर्देश

(IS 11532 का दूसरा पुनरीक्षण)

Draft Indian Standard

**CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF RIVER EMBANKMENTS
(LEVEES) – GUIDELINES**

(Second Revision of IS 11532)

Flood Management, Erosion Management and
Diversion Works Sectional Committee, WRD 22

Last Date for Comments:
13/10/2025

FOREWORD

(Formal Clauses of the foreword will be added later)

River embankment (levee) is an artificial bank built along a river for the purpose of protecting adjacent land from inundation by flood. Such type of structure is also called embankment, levee, stop-bank, bund or dyke. Construction of embankment to control flood is an age-old practice and is still being followed due to its proven suitability.

Previously construction and maintenance of river embankments were covered in two Indian Standards, namely IS 11532 Guidelines for construction of river embankments (levees) and IS 12028 Guidelines for maintenance of river embankments (levees). For the convenience of users, it was felt necessary to amalgamate these two standards and accordingly, the present revision has been taken up. With the publication of this revised standard, IS 12028 Guidelines for maintenance of river embankments (levees) shall stand withdrawn. In the first revision some of the provisions given in the earlier standards have been modified based on the current practices in the field and experience gained with the use of the standards in addition to incorporating a table giving approximate values of maximum dry density and optimum moisture content for different types of soil. Soil classification given in this standard is based on IS 1498 'Classification and identification of soils for general engineering purposes (first revision)'.

This revision (second revision) of the standard has been brought out gaining the experiences from the field and inputs from different stakeholders. Major changes that have been brought out in this revision are:

- a) Clause **3.3.8** has been incorporated under borrow pits, and
- b) Clause **3.5.2, 3.5.3 & 3.5.4** have been incorporated for better preparation of foundation.

For the purpose of deciding whether a particular requirement of this standard is complied with, the final value, observed or calculated, expressing the result of a test or analysis, shall be rounded off in accordance with IS 2 : 2022 'Rules for rounding off numerical values (*second revision*)'. The number of significant places retained in the rounded off value should be the same as that of the specified value in this standard.

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1 SCOPE

This standard covers the guidelines regarding construction and maintenance of river embankments (levees).

2 REFERENCES

The Indian Standards listed below contain provisions which through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this standard. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards given below:

<i>IS No.</i>	<i>Title</i>
IS 1498 : 1970	Classification and identification of soils for general engineering purposes (<i>first revision</i>)

3 CONSTRUCTION OF EMBANKMENTS

3.1 Construction of an embankment should envisage, for the sake of economy, maximum utilization of natural unprocessed materials available locally. Embankments may be homogeneous or zoned. They should generally be of compacted roll fill at controlled moisture content.

3.2 Investigation of borrow areas, their location and depth of excavation, foundation preparation, earthwork, compaction, moisture control and slope protection are the important aspects to be carefully attended to during construction.

3.3 Borrow Pits

3.3.1 Borrow areas should preferably be located on the river side of the proposed embankment, because they get silted up in course of time, whereas those located on the

countryside remains a permanent disfiguration and are liable to induce or aggravate seepage under the embankment, thereby causing increased maintenance problems.

3.3.2 For low embankment less than 6 m in height, borrow areas should not be selected within 25 m from the toe/heel of the embankment. In case of higher embankment, the distance should not be less than 50 m.

3.3.3 Preliminary soil investigation may be done from a few representative auger holes or borrow pits.

3.3.4 After selection of an area apparently suitable for borrow pits in accordance with **3.3.1**, **3.3.2** and **3.3.3**, detailed investigations should be undertaken for a systematic mapping and determination of engineering properties such as gradation, permeability, plastic limits, etc., of the soils in the borrow.

3.3.5 Plan showing borrow areas and the quantity of materials for different zones of the embankment section should be used for actual construction.

3.3.6 The recommended mean distance of the borrow pits from the toe of the embankments as well as the depth of borrow pits should generally be as under:

<i>Distance of Borrow Pits</i>	<i>Maximum Depth of Borrow pits</i>	
	<i>River Side</i>	<i>Country Side</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)
25 m to 50 m	1.0 m	0.6 m
Over 50 m up to 75 m	1.5 m	0.6 m
Over 75 m up to 100 m	2.0 m	0.6 m

3.3.7 In order to obviate development of flow parallel to embankment, cross bars of width eight times the depth of borrow pits spaced at 50 to 60 meters' center-to-center should be left in the borrow pits.

3.3.8 All borrow pits should be stripped of topsoil, sod (turf), loam, and any other objectionable materials considered unsuitable for use in the embankment. The material from borrow areas should be free of putrefying or deleterious substances that may produce toxic concentrations or combinations that could be harmful to human, animal, plant, or aquatic life.

3.4 Laboratory Tests

For important and also for embankments higher than 6 m, representative samples obtained from the borrow areas should be tested in the laboratory to determine the engineering properties of soils, such as gradation, permeability, plastic limits, shear strength, dry density, compaction tests, etc. as given in design.

3.5 Preparation of Foundation

3.5.1 The seat of the embankment should be properly prepared for fill placement. It should be ensured that all slumps, brush, large roots, top soil and other objectionable materials are completely removed before placement of the fill. Any ridge or mounds, which are in line of embankment, should be loosened by ploughing or stepped or dug or provided with V-cut benching at intervals running parallel to the center line. The prepared surface should enable proper bond with the fill material to be placed thereon.

3.5.2 For embankments to be constructed in swampy, marshy, or old lake bed areas, unsuitable materials should be removed before placing the fill. Underdrain facilities should be provided to remove spring or seepage water or to aerate and dry the materials that have become saturated due to poor surface drainage, or geosynthetics should be used as an alternative.

3.5.3 While constructing embankments on steep slopes a good interlock between the sloping foundation and new embankments should be ensured.

3.5.4 Global stability analysis of the embankment shall be done as per Seismic Zones based on the location of embankment.

3.6 Earthwork

3.6.1 *Embankment Profile*

A complete profile of the embankment with its correct height, width and all slopes dressed to true form should be laid by pegs, bamboo posts and strings at 50 m intervals or by actual construction of the embankment of 3 m length at 150 m intervals. The actual construction should, however, be done by giving suitable settlement allowances which may be about 1 to 2 percent of the embankment height.

3.6.2 *Embankment Involving Mechanical Compaction*

In case of embankment involving mechanical compaction, the materials free from all organic matter should be compacted in layers of 15 to 20 cm for the full width of the embankment and carried up regularly in accordance with embankment section. All clods should be broken up to a size having not more than 5 cm diameter. Each layer should be properly watered and compacted. The surface should be well graded and crowned in the center so that during rain the surface water is carried rapidly to the slopes of the fill.

3.6.3 *Embankment Involving Manual Compaction*

In case of embankment involving manual compaction, the layers not exceeding 15 cm thickness should be placed slightly sloped towards the centre of the crest so that rainfall will naturally consolidate the embankment during the construction. The materials should be free from organic matter. The top layer forming the crest of the embankment should

be suitably graded so that rainwater does not accumulate and create maintenance problems.

3.6.4 *Re-modelling of Embankments*

When adding new earthwork to existing embankment, the old bank should first be cut or benched into steps with the treads sloping slightly towards the center of the embankment and the surface of the old work should be wetted so that new earth may adhere to the old. Similarly, junctions should be made by cutting grips or forks in the side slopes of the old embankment.

3.6.5 *Incomplete Embankment*

In case the whole length is not taken up simultaneously, the incomplete embankment should have steps not steeper than overall longitudinal slope of 1 in 5 to permit satisfactory bond with the portion to be taken up later.

3.7 Compaction

3.7.1 The basic criteria of the quality and suitability of the work done is the degree of compaction attained. For effective quality control of compaction, data on optimum moisture content and maximum dry density obtained from laboratory compaction tests are required. For small embankments, in the absence of such laboratory data, values given in Table 1 may be used. The best result is obtained by spreading materials with a moisture content 1 to 2 percent less than the optimum moisture content in layers of limited thickness and rolling with properly designed rollers with sufficient number of passes. Smooth contact surface between successive layers should be avoided and uniform density throughout the fill should be achieved.

Table 1 Approximate Values of Maximum Dry Density and Optimum Moisture Content for Different Types of Soils

(Clause 3.7.1)

Sl. No.	Soil Classification	Proctor Compaction	
		Maximum Dry Density (g/cm ³)	Optimum Moisture Content percent
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
i)	GW	>1.907	< 13.3
ii)	GP	>1.762	<12.4
iii)	GM	> 1.826	< 14.5
iv)	GC	> 1.843	< 14.7
v)	SW	1.907± 0.08	13.3 ± 2.5
vi)	SP	1.762 ± 0.032	12.4± 1.0
vii)	SM	1.826 ±0.016	14.5±0.4
viii)	SM-SC	1.907 ± 0.016	12.8 ± 0.5
ix)	SC	1.842 ± 0.016	14.7±0.4
x)	ML	1.650 ± 0.016	19.2 ± 0.7
xi)	CL	1.730 ± 0.016	16.8 ± 0.7
xii)	MH	1.314 ± 0.064	36.3±3.2
xiii)	CH	1.506 ± 0.032	25.5 ± 1.2

NOTE — ± entries indicate 90 percent confidence limits of the average value.

3.7.2 Compaction of each layer of fill materials should proceed in systematic, orderly and continuous manner so as to ensure the specified coverage by the compactors. Sheep-foot roller or tamping type roller is generally accepted as the best available means of ensuring proper compaction for average type embankment material. The acceptable limit of compaction as compared to the dry density at optimum moisture content would depend on the desired shear strength for the stability of side slopes. For mechanical compaction the minimum compaction should be 90 percent and for manual compaction 85 percent. Adequate quality control and field tests are needed to ensure this.

3.7.3 If the soil is granular with practically no cohesion, road rollers are considered quite adequate for compaction.

3.7.4 Those parts of the fill which cannot be reached by rolling equipment should receive equivalent manual compaction or mechanical tampers. Particular care should be taken for suitable compaction and jointing of embankments with the structures.

3.8 Moisture Control for Mechanical Compaction

3.8.1 Proper moisture control of the material is very important in order to ensure proper compaction. Materials may be conditioned to the desired moisture content either at the site of excavation, on the embankment or under same condition at both the borrow pit and during placement. It is necessary that some rapid and convenient methods be

employed to determine whether or not the materials have the desired moisture content as they are placed on embankment.

3.8.2 The penetration resistance needle, which makes use of the penetration resistance-moisture relation for the material being placed, is very useful for the purpose. It is desirable to establish field laboratories to carry out tests in the field while compaction operation goes on.

3.9 Slope Protection

3.9.1 The surface protection of embankment against action of rain and wind is usually achieved by turfing. In case of embankment using non-cohesive material, a cover of 0.3 to 0.6 m thick cohesive material can be given. Since velocities along river side slopes of embankment are expected to be low, no slope protection may ordinarily be required and turfing on both sides may suffice. If river action is more severe, suitably designed slope protection should be adopted.

3.9.2 The planting of trees on embankment should not be permitted because their roots tend to loosen the structure of the embankment when shaken by wind storm which, in turn, causes cracks and leaks. Shrubs, thorny bushes and short grass growing on the slopes of embankments provide good protection against erosions, wave wash and stray cattle. Generally, the side slopes and 0.6 m width in top from the edges of the embankments should be turfed with grass sods and this turfing should extend beyond the toe to country-side and the river side by 6.0 m and 3.0 m respectively.

4 MAINTENANCE

4.1 Proper maintenance of embankments is extremely important as breaches in them can be disastrous and may cause even greater damage than the inundation by the floods where no embankments are provided. The maintenance work can be divided into 2 parts:

- a) Pre-monsoon maintenance, and
- b) Monsoon maintenance.

4.1.1 *Pre-monsoon Maintenance*

4.1.1.1 Existing embankments have to be repaired or reconditioned to the original designed section in advance for their efficient performance during the ensuing monsoons. The free board may be checked up for any rise in the bed level of the river or other

constrictions which may result in higher design flood level and provided/maintained accordingly.

4.1.1.2 All hollows and depressions in the embankment's section, wherever existing, should be made up with rammed earth after clearing the site of all loose and vegetal materials. Where the top material is sandy or silty, it is desirable to provide a cover of soil containing 10 to 15 percent of clay well rammed or rolled.

4.1.1.3 A register of leaks should be maintained indicating the location and action taken during the monsoon period. The leaks, which could not be fully treated during the monsoon period, should be attended to immediately afterwards. Such leakage sites should be opened in the full width of the embankment taking care to trace to its upstream ends, and then be refilled with good earth in 15 centimeter layers, watered and rammed, the old earth being stepped or benched back at the sides and new earthwork properly bonded and interlocked into the old.

4.1.1.4 Rodents and other animals make holes, cavities and tunnels through and under embankments. These are sources of danger causing leakage and excessive seepages which may give rise to serious breaches during flood period. Such holes should be carefully located, examined, provided with an inverted filter, filled with earth and rammed. Alternatively, such holes should be filled with well rammed stiff clay.

4.1.1.5 All the masonry works should be carefully finally inspected to detect if there is any danger of seepage of water along the planes of contact between the earth and masonry. The earth adjacent to the masonry work should be laid in 15 cm layers, watered and compacted, and brought to the design section.

4.1.1.6 For embankments which were severely threatened by erosion during the previous monsoon, revetment/rip rap or other river training works should be separately examined. Where stones or bricks, etc., are costly, cheaper means like brushwood matting, etc., may be used. In case of wave action, pitching should be taken at least 0.3 meter above the maximum height of wave expected.

4.1.1.7 Approach roads and also top of embankments, wherever they are designed to carry vehicular traffic, as well as ramps provided for inspection and maintenance should be kept in good condition so that they serve the purpose of transport of materials and inspections both during the pre-monsoon and monsoon periods. No habitation should be permitted on the embankments.

4.1.1.8 All departmental vehicles, boats and launches should be kept operational.

4.1.1.9 All sluice gates, regulation gates and valves should be properly greased, oiled and treated.

4.1.1.10 All tools and equipment including torch, lights, hurricane lamps, spades, etc., and flood fighting articles as well as materials for erecting temporary sheds at the work sites for workers should be arranged and stored in suitable places.

4.1.1.11 Proper communication system should be installed for quick transmission of messages to the concerned authorities.

4.1.2 *Maintenance During Monsoon*

4.1.2.1 During monsoon, prompt maintenance of the embankment is required as the flood water of river threatens the safety of the embankment mostly during this period. This is all the more important in case of new embankments and also in case of those reaches of old embankments where breaches occurred in the past. The establishment required to be engaged for proper maintenance of an embankment will vary depending upon importance of the embankment and behavior of the river. As soon as water touches the embankment and river shows rising trend of its water level, round the clock patrolling should start by the establishment engaged for this purpose and continue until water finally recedes from the embankment. During this period, inspection by senior officials should be carried out systematically and all the concerned officers and staff should remain alert to meet any emergent situation.

4.1.2.2 Special vigilance is necessary in the countryside of the embankment to detect any formation of boils due to seepage. This should be immediately attended to by providing loading berm to counter balance exit gradient. A suitable filter material may be placed around the boil below the loading berm to arrest fines in seepage water.

4.1.2.3 Water may seep through a sand stratum under the levee and emerge on the countryside in the form of bubbling springs. Under these conditions, a stream of water bursts through the ground, carrying with it sand which then settles around the edge of the hole. These sand boils may be as large as 1 to 1.3 meters in diameter and may occur from 13 to 100 meters from the levee or even further away.

4.1.2.4 As a protective measure embankments of earth filled sacks may be built around them thus ponding the water and creating a head on the countryside sufficient to stop the flow of silt through minimizing the effective head of water. If other boils take place outside this encircling embankment, it may be necessary to construct sub-levees around the area containing such sand-boils.

4.1.2.5 To prevent the water from overtopping and washing out a portion of the levee, a dowel at the river side of the top of the embankment with sand/earth filled bags may be provided.

4.1.2.6 The bags should be filled half full only so that they will fit closely against each other. Sand should not be used for filling the sacks, if clay or loamy soil is available. In case of emergency, the material may be taken from the back slope of the levee much above the hydraulic gradient line with respect to maximum flood level.

4.1.2.7 Repair of rain cuts in the embankment, stacking of material and machinery required for repairing, putting the top of embankment in order, etc., should also be made. Scouring and eroding behavior of the river should also be carefully watched for taking necessary precautionary measures. In this way, by means of proper vigilance and timely action for repair works, flood disaster can be reduced to a great extent.

4.1.2.8 All information connected with rising flood water level and flood situation should be passed on to concerned higher authorities to enable them to take safety measures in time.