

North Carolina Division of Forest Resources (N.C. Forest Service): July 2005  
Video Outline & Desired Learning Objectives: Video run time 24:24  
***“Forestry Stream Crossings”***

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### **Avoid Crossings**

Stream crossings can be a primary location for non-point source pollution and runoff from a logging job.

Because of that, stream crossings should not be installed unless no other way is available to access the land and resources on the other side of the stream.

### **FPG Summary on Stream Crossings**

There are rules in place that specify minimum standards that you must meet if stream crossings are installed or used. These rules fall under Section .0203 of the FPGs. A summary includes:

- If the situation allows, stream crossings should be avoided.
- Stream flow must not be obstructed
- Do not use streams as skid trails or access roads
- Protect the stream banks and channel from damage and erosion
- Divert sediment and runoff from the crossing location
- Provide ground cover within 10 working days of the initial soil disturbance.

### **The Bridgemat Concept & Bridgemat Examples**

If a stream crossing is needed, one option is to use “bridgemats”.

These are portable heavy steel or wooden panels that can be laid across the stream or ditch.

### **Bridgemat Crossing Locations**

When selecting a location to make a bridgemat stream crossing, look for a spot that has:

1. A right-angle crossing over the channel
2. A place where the channel is narrow
3. Solid footing on either side to support bridgemats & equipment
4. High ground on both sides at the crossing location

### **Other Uses (DOT ditches, soft spots)**

Bridgemats can also be used for crossing over DOT roadside ditches, and for use at logging decks, or in soft soil spots on a skid trail.

### **Installing Bridgemats**

When setting the bridgemats in place, keep your equipment out of the stream channel - place the mats across the channel first, then adjust them as needed to insure a firm, stable crossing.

In some cases, brush and small vegetation may not have to be removed since the weight of the mat will hold it down.

***X Do not leave a center gap between the travel lanes of the bridgemats***

***Close this center gap between panels*** with another mat, strong boards, metal panels, delimbed logs, or something to keep dirt and debris from getting into the water.

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Trees can be left standing as ‘bumper trees’ to guide the dragged logs straight-across the bridgemats. These guide trees help keep the tops of the skidded logs or trees from dragging debris into the stream channel.

### **Using & Inspecting Bridgemats**

#### ***Water Quality***

- Occasionally inspect the mats while in use and clean off excess mud, soil, or debris.

#### ***Safety***

- The position of the mats may need re-adjusting as they are being used, if slippage occurs.

### **Bridgemat Removal & BMPs**

- Remove the mats carefully to minimize damage to the stream bank and channels.
- Use BMP water diversions such as waterbars, sediment pits, turnouts, or other methods to control runoff from getting into the stream.
- Establish ground cover to prevent accelerated erosion into the water.

### **Where to Get Bridgemats?**

*The N.C. Forest Service has wood & steel bridgemats statewide for temporary loan-out.  
We also maintain a list of known builders / sellers of bridgemats & road mats.*

This list is available in the “Water Quality” section of NCDFR web site [www.dfr.state.nc.us](http://www.dfr.state.nc.us)  
Or call the nearest NCDFR office, listed below:

Sylva District	(828) 586-4007
Asheville District	(828) 667-5211
Lenoir District	(828) 757-5611
Mount Holly District	(704) 827-7576
Lexington District	(336) 956-2111
Hillsborough District	(919) 732-8105
Rockingham District	(910) 997-9220
Fayetteville District	(910) 437-2620
Rocky Mount District	(252) 442-1626
Whiteville District	(910) 642-5093
New Bern District	(252) 514-4764
Elizabeth City District	(252) 331-4781
Bertie County Headquarters	(252) 794-3725