**SECTION 329115X TOPSOIL**

**PART 1 – GENERAL**

**1.1** This item provides specifications for topsoil and for topsoil-related activities such as preparation of ground surfaces, removal of topsoil from designated areas, placement and spreading of topsoil, and soil stabilization methods. All activities shall conform with the standards described in this specification and occur at locations clearly indicated on site plans or as directed by the MAA Engineer.

**PART 2 – PRODUCTS**

**2.1 TOPSOIL.** Topsoil is a component of soil, composed of the surface layer of soil containing organic matter and free from any admixture of refuse or other materials toxic to plant growth. Topsoil shall be reasonably free from subsoils as well as all stumps, roots, brush, stones (1 inch or more in diameter), clay lumps, or similar objects. Brush and other vegetation that will not be incorporated with the topsoil during handling operations shall be removed. Topsoil shall be free from any parts of Johnson grass (*Sorgum halepense*), Canada thistle (*Circium arvense*) or phragmites (*Phragmites australis*) in addition to the following state designated noxious weeds: annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*), Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), bindweed (*Calystegia* spp.), cocklebur (*Xanthium* spp.), corn cockle (*Agrostemma githago*), dodder (*Cuscuta* spp.), giant foxtail (*Setaria* *magna*), horse nettle (*Solanum carolinense*), spurred anoda (*Anoda* spp.), wild garlic (*Allium* *vineale*), and wild onion (*Allium* *canadense*).

Topsoil shall conform to the standards required by the Maryland State Highway Administration as summarized below. Topsoil, unless otherwise specified or approved, shall have a pH range of approximately 6.0 to 7.5, as determined by laboratory testing. The organic content may not be less than 3% nor more than 20% as determined by the wet-combustion method (chromic acid reduction). Topsoil shall conform to the following size and texture specifications:

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| **SIEVE SIZE** | **MINIMUM PERCENT SOIL**  **PASSING BY WEIGHT** |
| 50.00 mm (2 in.) | 100 |
| 4.75 mm (No. 4) | 90 |
| 2.00 mm (No. 10) | 80 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SOIL PARTICLE SIZES AND TEXTURES** | **PERCENT PASSING BY WEIGHT** |
| Sand (2.0-0.050 mm) | 20-75 |
| Silt (0.050-0.002 mm) | 10-60 |
| Clay (less than 0.002 mm) | 5-30 |

**2.2 INSPECTION AND TESTING.** Within 10 days following acceptance of the bid, the Contractor shall notify the MAA Engineer of the proposed source of topsoil to be furnished for the project. The topsoil shall be inspected to determine whether the soil is appropriate for use and conforms to MAA standards. During the inspection, the Contractor may be required to collect representative soil samples from several locations within the area under consideration and to the proposed stripping depths for content analysis as described in Paragraph 2.1 of this Item. Samples shall be tested for pH, content of organic matter, particle size, and texture (percentage of sand, silt, and clay).

**2.3 SOILS FOR REPAIR.** Soils to be used for areas in need of repair shall be of equal quality or greater than those that exist in adjacent areas and shall meet the specifications described in Paragraph 2.1.

**PART 3 – EXECUTION**

**3.1 GENERAL.** Areas receiving topsoil shall be clearly shown on the site plan. If topsoil is available on site, locations of stockpiles or areas to be stripped of topsoil and the associated stripping depths also shall be shown on site plans. Suitable equipment necessary for proper preparation and treatment of the ground surface, stripping of topsoil, and handling and placing of all required materials shall be on site, in good condition, and approved by the MAA Engineer before topsoil operations begin.

**3.2 PREPARATION OF GROUND SURFACES.** Prior to depositing and spreading topsoil on a given area, the surface shall be loosened by discs, spike-tooth harrows, or other means approved by the MAA Engineer, to a minimum depth of 2 inches to facilitate bonding of the topsoil with the soil. The surface of the area receiving topsoil shall be clear of all stones greater than 1 inch in diameter as well as any litter or other materials that may be detrimental to proper bonding, the rise of capillary moisture, or the proper growth of the desired plants. Areas that may be too compact to respond to these operations shall receive special scarification prior to application of any soil.

Grades on the area to receive topsoil, previously established by the Contractor or others, and shown on site plans, shall be maintained in a true and even condition. Where grades have not been established, the areas shall be smooth-graded and the surface left at a prescribed grade in an even and properly compacted condition to prevent, insofar as practical, the formation of low areas or pockets where water may stand. Damages caused by erosion or other forces that occur after the completion of grading shall be repaired prior to the application of topsoil. The Contractor will repair such damages, which may include filling gullies, smoothing irregularities, and repairing other incidental damages prior to the application of topsoil.

**3.3 OBTAINING TOPSOIL.** Prior to stripping of the topsoil from designated areas, all vegetation, briers, stumps and large roots, rubbish, and stones that might interfere with subsequent operations shall be removed using methods approved by the Engineer. Heavy sods or other cover shall be removed.

1. **SALVAGED TOPSOIL (TOPSOIL OBTAINED ON SITE).** When suitable topsoil is available on site, the Contractor shall salvage this material from the areas as indicated on site plans and to the depth directed by the MAA Engineer. The salvaged topsoil shall either be spread on areas that have already been tilled and smooth-graded or stockpiled in areas previously approved by the MAA Engineer and indicated by site plans. Any topsoil stockpiled by the Contractor shall be removed from the site and properly stored at an MAA-designated location for future use. Any topsoil that has been stockpiled on the site by others and is no longer required for topsoiling purposes shall be removed from the site and properly disposed of by the Contractor. All stockpile sites and adjacent areas that have been disturbed by the Contractor shall be graded and put into a condition acceptable for seeding or other landscaping activities.
2. **FURNISHED TOPSOIL (TOPSOIL OBTAINED OFF SITE).** When topsoil is secured off site, the Contractor shall locate and obtain the supply with the approval of the MAA Engineer. The Contractor shall notify the MAA Engineer sufficiently in advance of operations so that necessary measurements and tests can be performed. The Contractor shall only remove the topsoil from approved areas and to the depth as directed. The topsoil shall be hauled to the site of work and either placed for spreading by others or spread by the Contractor as specified by site plans. Any topsoil hauled to the site of work and stockpiled shall be removed from the site following completion of the task and properly stored at an MAA-designated location for future use.
3. **SPREADING TOPSOIL.** Topsoil shall be evenly spread to a minimum uniform depth of 4 inches after compaction on all areas, with the exception of those areas with a finished grade of 4:1 or steeper. In these sloped areas topsoil should be spread to a minimum depth of 4 inches. Spreading shall not occur when the ground or topsoil is frozen, excessively wet, or otherwise in a condition detrimental to the work. Spreading shall be conducted so that turfing operations can proceed with minimal soil preparation.

After spreading the topsoil the Contractor shall collect and dispose of rocks (1 inch or more in diameter), roots, litter, or any other foreign material occurring on the surface of the topsoil. Large stiff clods and hard lumps of soil shall be pulverized. After removal of such objects has been completed, the topsoil shall be graded. Any topsoil or other dirt falling upon pavements as a result of hauling or handling of topsoil shall be promptly removed and disposed of by the Contractor.

1. **SOIL STABILIZATION MATTING.** The need for soil stabilization matting will be approved by the MAA Engineer on a project-by-project basis. Soil stabilization matting shall consist of machine-produced mats of wood fibers, wood excelsior, or biodegradable man-made fibers and shall be 40 to 96 inches wide. Matting shall have a uniform thickness and distribution of fibers. All soil stabilization matting shall be smolder resistant. If chemicals are required during application of matting, the chemicals shall be non-leaching, nontoxic to vegetation (including the germination of seed), and non-injurious to the skin.

If excelsior matting is utilized, the top and bottom shall be covered by a biodegradable extruded plastic netting with a maximum mesh size of 2 square inches (50 by 50 mm) or be covered (on the topside) by netting machine sewn on 2-inch (50 mm) centers along the longitudinal axis of the material. The average breaking strength of any two strands of netting shall be at least 5 pounds. Netting shall be entwined with matting fibers in a manner that will provide adequate reinforcement against damage during handling and placement and shall resist degradation for a minimum of six months and a maximum of one year.

1. **STAPLES.** Staples shall be either U- or T-shaped steel wire with minimum gauges of No. 11 (3.061 mm) and No. 8 (4.115 mm) respectively. The U-shaped staples shall be at least 6 inches (150 mm) long and average between 1 and 1.5 inches (25 to 40 mm) wide. The T-shaped staples shall have a primary leg 8-inches (200-mm) long, a secondary leg 1-inch (25 mm) long, and a 4-inch (100-mm) head.

**PART 4 – METHOD OF MEASUREMENT**

**4.1** Topsoil will be measured by volume in cubic yards computed by the method of end areas. The quantity of topsoil to be paid for will be measured by the number of square yards measured in place and will account for depth.

**4.2** Salvaged topsoil (topsoil obtained on site) will be measured by the number of square yards of topsoil measured in its original position, and again after it has been stripped or excavated. Topsoil stockpiled by others and removed for topsoiling by the Contractor will be measured by the number of square yards of topsoil measured to a specific depth in the stockpile. Salvaged topsoil will be measured by volume in either cubic yards computed by the method of end areas or square yards at 1-, 2-, or 4-inch depths.

**4.3** Furnished topsoil (topsoil obtained off site) will be measured by the number of square yards of topsoil measured in its original position, and again after it has been stripped or excavated. Furnished topsoil will be measured by volume in either cubic yards computed by the method of end areas or square yards at 1-, 2-, or 4-inch depths.

**PART 5 – BASIS OF PAYMENT**

**5.1** Payment will be made at the contract unit price per cubic yard for topsoiling. This price will provide full compensation for furnishing all materials and for all preparations, placing, and spreading of materials, and for all labor, equipment, tolls, and incidentals necessary for the completion of the task.

Payment will be made under:

329115X.1 Topsoil --per cubic yard

329115X.2 Salvaged Topsoil – per square yard at 1-inch depth

329115X.3 Furnished Topsoil – per square yard at 1-inch depth

329115X.4 Salvaged Topsoil – per square yard at 2-inch depth

329115X.5 Furnished Topsoil – per square yard at 2-inch depth

329115X.6 Salvaged Topsoil – per square yard at 4-inch depth

329115X.7 Furnished Topsoil – per square yard at 4-inch depth

**END OF SECTION 329115X**