

## **Public Beach Sand Fence Installation Guidelines**

When properly installed, sand fences can help build dunes by trapping wind-blown sand. But if installed improperly and not maintained they can pose a risk to public safety, impede public access and use of the recreational beach, hinder emergency vehicle and beach maintenance access at times of high tide. Improperly installed sand fences can also trap or endanger sea turtles, their nests or hatchlings.

It is the policy of the City of Virginia Beach to allow installation of sand fencing in areas where dune formation is feasible and in areas where existing dunes have been damaged. Sand fencing may be installed in accordance with the following guidelines without the need for a separate permit. The City reserves the right to remove any sand fencing that is deemed to be contrary to the public interest or hazardous.

Installation of sand fencing must comply with the following:

1. Sand fencing must be placed as far landward as possible to avoid interference with sea turtle nesting, public access and use of the beach.
2. Landward end of sand fencing must tie into an existing bulkhead, property line, easement line, or established dunes.
3. Sand fencing must be installed at a 45-degree or greater angle to the shoreline.
4. Each section of fence must not be longer than 10 feet, and sections must be spaced at least 7 feet apart. (Once 50% of the fence height and length has been covered by sand an additional row of fencing can be installed offset 5 feet within the existing row of fencing.)
5. Sand fencing shall only be allowed within 20 horizontal feet of the property or easement line. No sand fencing shall be allowed outside this 20 foot zone.
6. A minimum horizontal distance of 100 feet shall be maintained between the seaward limit of the sand fencing and mean high water (MHW).
7. The fencing must be no taller than 5 feet and built from evenly spaced thin wooden vertical slats connected with twisted wire.
8. Sand fences must not be installed within 20 feet of a public beach access.
9. Sand fences must be installed without the use of mechanical equipment.
11. No grading or pushing up of sand is allowed.
12. If sand fencing is not installed in accordance with these guidelines it must be removed and/or re-installed in full compliance.
13. If sand fence becomes loose, broken or deemed to be hazardous it must be removed or repaired.
14. If sand fence becomes exposed by high tides or erosion it must be removed.
15. Existing sand fence that extends more than 20 feet into the public beach shall be removed back to within 20 feet.
16. Should shoreline erosion cause the horizontal distance between sand fencing and MHW to decrease to less than 100 feet, sand fencing shall be removed to the extent necessary to maintain the 100 foot minimum distance.

**Installation Details:**

