



INSTALLATION QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL | AMERICAS

# Geomembrane products



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This manual provides an overview of the Solmax Installation Quality Assurance procedures consistent with industry accepted practices to ensure that the Solmax's geomembrane products installed will best perform for their intended purpose. All installation work will be performed in strict accordance per the customer's specifications.

# 2. MATERIAL DELIVERY

- A. Upon arrival on site, QA personnel will take stock of all materials on-site.
- B. Roll numbers will be logged on the Inventory Check List and cross-referenced with the Bill of Lading.

Copies of the Inventory Check List and signed Bill of Lading should be sent to Solmax while the on-site QA personnel retains the original copies. Any visible damage to roll materials should be noted on the roll and Inventory Check List.

# 3. UNLOADING AND STORAGE PROCEDURES

- A. Rolls of material shall be unloaded with equipment that will not damage the geomembrane.
- B. Fabric-straps, spreader bars, stinger bars, or other approved equipment shall be used for handling rolls of geomembrane.
- C. Materials should be stored in a flat, dry and well drained area.
- D. The surface shall be free of sharp rocks or other objects that could damage the materials.

# 4. SUBGRADE PREPARATION

- A. The general contractor is responsible for preparing and maintaining the subgrade. The subgrade should be prepared and maintained per the job specifications.
- B. The site manager shall be responsible for assuring that the subgrade surface has been properly prepared for deployment of geosynthetics. After each day's deployment the Subgrade Surface Acceptance form will be signed by all parties.

# 5. PANEL PLACEMENT

- A. Each panel will be assigned a number as described below.
  - 1. When there is one layer, panels may be designated with only a number, e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4 etc.
  - 2. When two or more layers are required, use a letter and number, i.e.
    - a. Primary Liner P1, P2, P3, P4 etc.
    - b. Secondary Liner S1, S2, S3, S4 etc.
    - c. Tertiary Liner T1, T2, T3, T4 etc.
- B. This numbering system should be used whenever possible. Agreement to a panel numbering system should be made at the pre-construction meeting. However, it is essential that the installer, the owner representative and third party QA inspector agree.
- C. Panel numbers shall be written in large block letters in the center of each deployed panel. The roll number, date of deployment and length (gross) should be noted below the panel number. All notes should be made, so that they are easily visible from a distance. On long panels it is beneficial to write information on both ends.
- D. Panel numbers shall be logged on the Panel Placement Log along with the roll number and other information necessary to complete the form.
- E. If there is a partial roll left after deployment, it is important to write the last four digits of the roll number in several locations on the roll along with the estimated length for future identification.

- F. Deployment of geomembrane panels shall be performed in a manner that will comply with the following guidelines:
1. Unroll geomembrane using methods that will not damage geomembrane and will protect underlying surface from damage. Solmax Leak Location should be installed with Conductive layer facing down.
  2. Place temporary ballast, such as sandbags, on geomembrane that will not damage the geomembrane and to prevent wind uplift.
  3. Personnel walking on geomembrane shall not engage in activities or wear shoes that could damage it. Smoking is not permitted on the geomembrane.
  4. Do not allow heavy vehicular traffic directly on geomembrane. Rubber tired and tracked ATV's and equipment are acceptable if contact pressure is less than 8 psi.
    - a. Protect geomembrane in areas of heavy traffic by placing protective cover over the geomembrane.
    - b. Prior to driving on any geomembrane layer, please check for sharp edges, embedded rocks, or other foreign objects that may protrude in the tires and tracks.
    - c. Path driven on geomembranes shall be as straight as possible with no sharp turns, sudden stops or quick starts.
    - d. Areas where driving occurs shall be continuously and thoroughly inspected throughout the deployment process by the contractor and the third party CQA.
- G. In the past, it has been a common practice to turn to leak surveys once the project has been constructed and the barrier system performance has been found unsatisfactory. A current state-of-the-practice geosynthetic installation would plan ahead for both post-installation/exposed, pre-cover soil placement survey (commonly done utilizing ASTM D 7240 or ASTM D 7002) and a post soil cover survey (commonly done utilizing ASTM D 7007). Proper execution of these surveys and protocols are best applied before installation. State-of-the-art welding techniques, proper isolation of sections for testing, and other details can be simply and inexpensively addressed during installation, but may be expensive and complicated to recreate if a leak is discovered after the facility has been placed into service.

## 6. TRIAL WELDS

- A. Seaming apparatus shall be allowed to warm up a minimum of 10 minutes before performing trial welds.
- B. Each seaming apparatus along with a welding technician will pass a trial weld prior to use. Trial welds are to be performed at a minimum in the morning and afternoon, and whenever there is a power shutdown.
- C. Fusion or wedge welds will always be performed or conducted on samples at least 6.0 ft (1.8 m) long. Extrusion welds will be done on samples at least 3.0 ft (0.9 m) long. Note: Always perform trial welds in the same conditions that exist on the job. Run the trial welds on the ground, not the installed liner. Do not use a windbreak unless you are using one on the job.
- D. Operating temperatures should be monitored while welding. The welding technician should verify that the equipment is capable of maintaining temperature while welding.
- E. Sampling Procedure
1. Cut five 1.0 in (2.54 cm) wide specimens from the trial weld sample. Specimens will always be cut using a 1.0 in (2.54 cm) die cutter.
  2. The inside and outside tracks on the coupon should be identified to assist in troubleshooting problems in case the weld fails. The outside track will be defined as the track, which would be peeled if pulling the overlap exposed in a typical installation, or the seam that is closest to the edge of the top sheet. The inside track is the seam closest to the edge of the bottom sheet.
- F. Cutter
1. Only cut one specimen at a time to avoid damaging the die cutter.
  2. Samples should be free of sand and grit prior to cutting sample.
  3. Inspect the die edge weekly for nicks, dents or signs of dullness. Dullness of the cutting edge may damage the specimens.

4. Remove die when edge has been dulled and lightly reshape it with a medium hand file. When wear is excessive return it for a replacement die.
5. When the cutting board becomes deeply scored and/or interferes with coupon cutting it should be replaced.
6. To adjust the depth of the die cut into the cutting board, after replacing the cutting board or sharpening the die, 0.015 in (0.03 cm) washer shims can be added or removed between the cutting ram and the ram extension. Only add shims when cutting is difficult due to lack of depth of cut.

#### G. Trial Weld Testing

1. Allow specimens to cool prior to testing. Avoid separating the coupons while hot as failure of the sheet may be initiated and false readings indicated.
2. In extreme heat the coupons may need to be cooled, using water or an insulated cooler prior to peel testing. Lab conditions specify 70°F (21°C) (plus or minus 4°). Coupon temperatures greater than 70°F/21°C degrees may result in lowered strengths.
3. Visually inspect the coupons for squeeze-out, footprint, pressure and general appearance.
4. Each of the five coupons will be tested in peel on the field tensiometer at a separation rate of 2 in per minute. Shear tests, in addition to the peel tests, will be performed.

#### H. Pass/Fail Criteria

1. Criteria for passing trial welds will be as follows:
  - a. Seam must exhibit film tear bond (FTB). Seam separation equal to or greater than 25% of the track width shall be considered a failing test.
  - b. Peel and shear values shall meet or exceed the values as listed in Appendix D, Table 1 for **GSE**® HD smooth or textured sheet (@ 2 in/min) / (5.08 cm/min).
  - c. Peel and shear values shall meet or exceed the values as listed in Appendix D, Table 2 for **GSE** LL smooth or textured sheet (@ 2 in/min) / (5.08 cm/min).
  - d. Both tracks of fusion welded samples must pass for the trial weld to be considered acceptable. If any of the five coupons fail due to seam incursion (no FTB) or low strength values, the trial weld must be performed again.
  - e. The QA personnel will give approval to proceed with welding after observing and recording all trial welds.
2. All trial weld data will be logged on the Trial Weld Log.
3. When logging fusion welded peel values on the Trial Weld Log (Appendix E) indicate the values for the outside track first, followed by the inside track.
4. Speed and temperature settings will be recorded for each machine trial weld as appropriate.

## 7. GEOMEMBRANE FIELD SEAMING

- A. The seam number takes the identity of the panels on each side. The seam between panels 1 & 2 becomes seam 1/2.
- B. Welding technicians will record their initials, machine number, date and time at the start of every seam and on the Seam Log. The technician should also periodically mark temperatures along the seam and at the end of the seam.
- C. Approved processes for field seaming and repairing are fusion welding and extrusion welding. All welding equipment shall have accurate temperature monitoring devices installed and working to ensure proper measurement.
- D. Fusion welding shall be used for seaming panels together and is not used for patching or detail work. The site manager shall verify that:
  1. The equipment used is functioning properly.
  2. All work is performed on clean surfaces and done in a professional manner. No seaming will be performed in adverse weather conditions.

- E. Extrusion welding shall be used primarily for repairs, patching and special detail fabricating and may be used for seaming. The site manager shall verify that:
  1. Equipment used is functioning properly.
  2. Welding personnel are purging the extrusion welders of heat degraded extrudate prior to actual use.
  3. All work is performed on clean surfaces and done in a professional manner. No seaming will be performed in adverse weather conditions.
- F. For seam preparation, the welding technician shall verify that:
  1. Prior to seaming, the seaming area is free of moisture, dust, dirt, sand or debris of any nature.
  2. The seam is overlapped properly for fusion welding.
  3. The seam is overlapped or extended beyond damaged areas at least 4.0 in (10.16 cm) when extrusion welding.
  4. The seam is properly heat tacked and abraded prior to extrusion welding.
  5. Seams are welded with fewest number of unmatched wrinkles or "fishmouths".
- G. No seaming will be performed in ambient air temperatures or adverse weather conditions that would jeopardize the integrity of the liner installation.

## 8. FIELD DESTRUCTIVE TESTING

The process and protocol of obtaining destructive samples may result in a geosynthetic system that is weaker and less effective. Destructive samples are necessary for verifying the effectiveness of the welding process. Everything that can be done to remove destructive sample locations from within the geosynthetic system should be done i.e. taking samples from runouts, anchor trenches, and practice pads. Within the body of the installation, sample locations should be removed from critical areas such as, the toe of sloped areas, near panel connections, adjacent to penetrations, etc. Ideally the destructive samples will be taken at as low a frequency as possible, within flat areas of the installation where the impact of a hole in the liner can be minimized.

- A. Destructive seam tests shall be performed to evaluate bonded seam strength. The frequency of sample removal shall be according to the site specifications. Location of the destructive samples will be selected and marked by the QA technician or third party QA inspector. Field testing should take place as soon as possible after seam is completed.
- B. Samples should be labeled in numerical order, i.e. DS-1, DS-2 etc. This should carry through any layer and/or multiple ponds; do not start numbering from 1 again. The size of samples and distribution should be approximately 12 in x 39 in (30.48 cm x 99.06 cm) (Size may vary depending on job requirements) and distributed as follows:
  - a. 12 in x 12 in (30.48 cm x 30.48 cm) piece given to QA technician for field testing.
  - b. 12 in x 12 in (30.48 cm x 30.48 cm) in piece sent to the Solmax's corporate headquarters for testing, if required.
- 3. 12 in x 12 in (30.48 cm x 30.48 cm) piece given to third party for independent testing or to archive.  
NOTE: All samples will be labeled showing test number, seam number, machine number, job number, date welded and welding tech number.
- C. The sample given to the QA technician in the field shall have ten coupons cut and be tested with a tensiometer adjusted to a pull rate as shown below. The strength of four out of five specimens should meet or exceed the values below, and the fifth specimen must meet or exceed 80% of the value below.
  1. Seam must exhibit film tear bond (FTB). Seam separation should be < 25% of the track width.
  2. Peel and shear values shall meet or exceed the values as listed in Appendix D, Table 1 for **GSE** HD smooth or textured sheet (@ 2 in/min) / (5.08 cm/min).
  3. Peel and shear values shall meet or exceed the values as listed in Appendix D, Table 2 for **GSE** LL smooth or textured sheet (@ 2 in/min) / (5.08 cm/min).
- D. All weld destructive test data will be logged on the Destructive Test Log.
- E. When logging fusion welded peel values on the Destructive Test Log, indicate the values for the outside track first, followed by the inside track.

- F. Test results will be noted in the Destructive Test Log as Pass (P) or Fail (F).
- G. If a test fails, additional samples will be cut, approximately 10 ft on each side of the failed test, and retested. These will be labeled A (After) & B (Before). This procedure will repeat itself until a sample passes. Then the area of failed seam between the two tests that pass will be capped or reconstructed.

## 9. NON-DESTRUCTIVE TESTING

- A. All seams shall be non-destructively tested over their full length using an air pressure, vacuum box or spark test device.
- B. For air pressure testing, the following procedures are applicable to those seams welded with a double seam fusion welder.
  - 1. The equipment used shall consist of an air tank or pump capable of producing a minimum 30 psi and a sharp needle with a pressure gauge attached to insert into the air chamber.
  - 2. Seal both ends of the seam by heating and squeezing them together. Insert the needle with the gauge into the air channel. Pressurize the air channel to 30 psi.  
  
Note the time the test starts and wait a minimum of 5 minutes to check. If pressure after five minutes has dropped less than 4 psi then the test is successful (Thickness of material may cause variance).
  - 3. Cut opposite seam end and listen for pressure release to verify full seam has been tested.
  - 4. If the test fails, follow these procedures.
    - a. While channel is under pressure, walk the length of the seam listening for a leak.
    - b. While channel is under pressure, apply a soapy solution to the seam edge and look for bubbles formed by air escaping.
    - c. Re-test the seam in smaller increments until the leak is found.
  - 5. Once the leak is found using one of the procedures above, cut out the area and retest the portions of the seams between the leak areas per 4a to 4b above. Continue this procedure until all sections of the seam pass the pressure test.
  - 6. Repair the leak with a patch.
- C. For vacuum testing, the following procedures are applicable to those seams welded with an extrusion welder.
  - 1. The equipment used shall consist of a vacuum pumping device, a vacuum box and a foaming agent in solution.
  - 2. Wet a section with the foaming agent, place vacuum box over wetted area. Evacuate air from the vacuum box to a pressure suitable to effect a seal between the box and geomembrane. Observe the seam through the viewing window for the presence of soap bubbles emitting from the seam.
  - 3. If no bubbles are observed, move box to the next area for testing. If bubbles are observed, mark the area of the leak for repair and re-test. Note: If vacuum testing fusion welded seams, the overlap flap must be cut off to perform the tests.
  - 4. All non-destructive tests will be noted in the Non-Destructive Logs.
- D. At locations where seams cannot be nondestructively tested using the previously described methods, such as pipe penetrations, alternate nondestructive spark testing or equivalent should be substituted.

## 10. DEFECTS AND REPAIRS

- A. All seams and non-seam areas of the geomembrane lining system shall be examined for defects.
- B. Identification of the defect should be made using the following procedures:
  - 1. For any defect in the seam or sheet that is an actual breach (hole) in the liner, installation personnel shall circle the defect and mark with the letter P alongside the circle. The letter P indicates a patch is required.
  - 2. For any defect that is not an actual hole, installation personnel shall circle the defect indicating that the repair method may be only an extruded bead and that a patch is not required.
  - 3. Each suspect area that has been identified shall be repaired and tested in the non-destructive method.

After all work is completed, the site manager will conduct a final walk-through to confirm all repairs have been completed and debris removed. Only after this final evaluation by the site manager, the owner, and the agent shall any material be placed over the installed liner.

## 11. REPAIR PROCEDURES

- A. Any portion of the geomembrane lining system exhibiting a defect that has been marked for repair may be repaired with any one or combination of the following procedures:
  - 1. Patching - used to repair holes, tears, undispersed raw materials in the sheet.
  - 2. Grind and Reweld - used to repair small sections of extrusion welded seams.
  - 3. Spot Welding - Used to repair small minor, localized flaws.
  - 4. Flap Welding - Used to extrusion weld the flap of a fusion weld in lieu of a full cap.
  - 5. Capping - Used to repair failed seams.
- B. The following conditions shall apply to the above methods:
  - 1. Surfaces of the geomembrane which are to be repaired shall be prepared according to this section.
  - 2. All surfaces must be clean and dry at the time of the repair.
  - 3. All seaming equipment used in repairing procedures shall be qualified.
  - 4. All patches and caps shall extend at least 4 in beyond the edge of the defect, and all patches must have rounded corners.
  - 5. All cut out holes in liner must have rounded corners of 3.0 in (7.62 cm) minimum radius.
- C. Patches should be labeled in numerical order, i.e. RP-1, RP-2, etc. This should carry through any layer and/or multiple ponds, and do not start with the number 1 again.

## 12. AS-BUILT DRAWINGS

The installer shall provide the following:

- A. As-built drawings will be provided at the completion of the project.
- B. As-built drawings will include geomembrane panels and panel numbers with the last four digits of the roll number.
- C. Panel numbers and the full roll numbers will correspond with the Panel Placement Log.
- D. All destructive testing and repair locations will be placed on the as-built drawings.





# APPENDIX B: SUBGRADE SURFACE ACCEPTANCE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project: \_\_\_\_\_ Site Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Project #: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Partial: \_\_\_\_\_ Final: \_\_\_\_\_

This document only applies to the acceptability of surface conditions for installation of geosynthetic products. Solmax does not accept responsibility for compaction, elevation or moisture content, nor for the surface maintenance during deployment. Structural integrity of the subgrade and maintenance of these conditions are the responsibility of the owner or earthwork contractor.

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Geosynthetic Installer:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

For Owner / Contractor:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Acceptance Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Area Accepted: \_\_\_\_\_ s.f Total Area Accepted to date: \_\_\_\_\_ s.f



## APPENDIX D: SEAM STRENGTH PROPERTIES

**Table 1: GSE HD Seam strength properties**

Material (Mil / mm)	Sheer strength	Fusion peel	Extrusion peel
	ppi	ppi	ppi
40 mil / 1 mm	80	60	52
60 mil / 1.5 mm	100	91	78
80 mil / 2 mm	160	121	104
100 mil / 2.5 mm	200	151	130

**Table 2: GSE LL Seam strength properties**

Material (Mil / mm)	Sheer strength	Fusion peel	Extrusion peel
	ppi	ppi	ppi
40 mil / 1 mm	60	50	44
60 mil / 1.5 mm	90	75	66
80 mil / 2 mm	120	100	88
100 mil / 2.5 mm	150	125	114

















### **About Solmax**

Solmax is a world leader in sustainable construction solutions, for civil and environmental infrastructure. Its pioneering products separate, contain, filter, drain and reinforce essential applications in a more sustainable way – making the world a better place.

The company was founded in 1981, and has grown through the acquisition of GSE, TenCate Geosynthetics and Propex. It is now the largest geosynthetics company in the world, empowered by more than 2,000 talented people. Solmax is headquartered in the province of Quebec, Canada, with subsidiaries and operations across the globe.

### **Uncompromised quality**

Our products are manufactured to strict international quality standards. All our products are tested and verified at our dedicated and comprehensive laboratories which maintain numerous accreditations. We offer our partners a wide scope of testing according to published standards to ensure products delivered to sites meet specified quality requirements.

# Let's build infrastructure better



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