

CETCO GCL

# CONSTRUCTION QUALITY ASSURANCE (CQA) MANUAL

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## SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Definitions

**Construction Quality Assurance.** For the purposes of this manual, construction quality assurance (CQA) is defined as a planned system of activities that provides assurance that *installation* of the geosynthetic clay liner (GCL) proceeds in accordance with the project design drawings and specifications. In general, these activities include continuous inspection of the installation, testing of materials and procedures, and overall documentation.

**Construction Quality Control.** Again, for the purposes of this manual, construction quality control (CQC) is defined as a planned system of activities that provides assurance that the properties of the GCL *materials* meet the requirements of the project specifications. These activities primarily include materials testing and documentation.

There is a great deal of overlap in the nature of CQA and CQC, and from a practical standpoint, CQA and CQC activities are often performed by the same party. For this reason, we will use the term CQA to describe *all* of the quality-oriented tasks relating to the GCL and its installation.

#### **1.2 Scope and Purpose of the CQA Manual**

This manual is written to address third-party CQA activities and is *not* intended as a guide for GCL installation. Installation guidelines are available separately from CETCO (see Technical References TR-402). This manual is also not intended to describe the various *manufacturing* quality assurance and quality control (MQA/MQC) activities performed by CETCO at the GCL manufacturing facilities (see Technical Reference No. TR-403).

The purpose of the CQA Manual is provide the project CQA personnel with a general format for assuring that the GCL delivered to the job meets the requirements of the specifications and that this material is installed in accordance with the design drawings and specifications. This manual should be modified as necessary by the design or CQA engineer in order to account for site-specific or project-specific concerns and conditions. Any such changes, however, should be discussed with CETCO before they are introduced into the final version of the project CQA plan.

For the convenience of the CQA personnel, an overall CQA Checklist is provided in Appendix A. This checklist or a similar version thereof is designed to be used on a daily basis to document that all CQA activities are consistently executed throughout the project. The checklists should be maintained at the job site and should be included chronologically in the final CQA documentation package (Section 7).

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#### SECTION 2

#### PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is vital that all parties involved in the installation of the GCL are in close communication with each other throughout the project, and that they fully understand the requirements of the project CQA plan. For the purposes of this manual, the qualifications and responsibilities of the various parties are delineated as follows:

#### Installing Contractor

Responsible for installing the GCL. The contractor should appoint an on-site Construction Supervisor to coordinate the installation effort and to interact with the other parties on the job site. The installing contractor should have prior experience in GCL installation and should staff the project with qualified technicians.

#### **On-Site Engineer**

Usually the design engineer or designee, this person is responsible for general oversight of the installation. Provides assurance that construction is performed as designed, although not formally responsible for CQA. Primary contact when the installing contractor is in need of clarification of design issues. Primary contact for dispute/problem resolution. This person should be a registered professional engineer.

#### CQA Engineer

Charged with CQA for Bentomat installation as well as for any other liner system components. Oversees all CQA inspection, testing, and documentation. This person should be a registered professional engineer or a certified geosynthetics installation technician. This person must also be independent of the other parties on site.

#### Manufacturer's Representative

CETCO may provide on-site start-up assistance, especially those in which the installer has little or no prior experience or where unusual site conditions exist. The on-site engineer or installer is responsible for notifying CETCO of the intended installation schedule such that CETCO may provide timely guidance during the start-up process. CETCO's GCL installation experience may provide valuable insights to the uninitiated engineer and/or installer.

CETCO also acts as the liaison between the manufacturing plant and the installer and coordinates the release of GCL from the plant in accordance with the installer's schedule. CETCO's *on-site* involvement is typically lessened when it is determined that the installer is sufficiently capable of installing GCL without CETCO's continuous assistance. CETCO remains available throughout the project should questions or problems arise.

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#### **CQA Laboratory**

The GCL conformance tests in this manual are designed to be performed at the job site to facilitate real-time response as test results are generated. In some projects where additional testing is required, however, it may be necessary to utilize the services of an off-site laboratory. The on-site engineer should verify that the selected laboratory has ample experience in the testing of GCLs and is aware of the general content of the project CQA plan as well as its specific testing requirements. The CQA engineer should establish a key contact at the laboratory to coordinate sample delivery procedures, confirm testing parameters and methods, and arrange the timely reporting of test results.

It is recommended that a preconstruction meeting be held between the above parties in order to establish working relationships with one another and to review the design drawings and specifications prior to deployment of the GCL. Thereafter, regular meetings on a daily or weekly basis are recommended as the project continues.

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# SECTION 3 ON-SITE HANDLING

This section describes the procedures and equipment to be used in handling the GCL when it arrives at the job site. Proper execution of these procedures will ensure that the GCL is not damaged prior to installation. It should be noted that ASTM D 5888 also provides guidelines for GCL handling. The recommendations included herein are consistent with all ASTM guidelines.

CETCO's GCLs are produced in slightly different sizes depending upon the product selected. Weights and dimensions of these products and their corresponding core pipe sizes required for safe handling are provided in Table 1 below.

Product	Panel Size (m)	Roll Diam. (mm)	Typ. Roll Weight (kg)	Core Diam. (mm)	Core Pipe Diameter (mm)	Core Pipe Length (m)	Minimum Core Pipe Strength
Bentomat	4.57 x 45.7	610	1,200	100	89	6.1	ХХН
Claymax	4.57 x 45.7	510	1,250	100	89	6.1	ХХН

#### Table 1. GCL panel sizes and corresponding core pipe requirements.

It should be recognized that the weight of the GCL rolls will dictate what type of core pipe will be sufficiently strong for unloading and handling activities. Experience has shown that the type of steel from which the pipe was produced will influence its ability to sustain the weight of the roll. The strongest steel available should be used to prevent pipe bending. A core pipe that deflects more than 75 mm as measured from end to midpoint when the roll is lifted can cause damage to the GCL and is *not acceptable.* The pipes used to unload or deploy the GCL *must not bend* at any time.

#### 3.1 Unloading Procedures

The GCL may be delivered to the job site in one of two ways: by flatbed truck or by closed trailer/container. Regardless of the delivery method, all unloading activities should take place away from main roadways and high-traffic areas at the site. The designated unloading area should be flat, dry, and stable, and should provide adequate peripheral access for the unloading equipment. Different techniques for unloading the GCL are used accordingly. Using the procedures and equipment described below will minimize unloading time.

#### 3.1.1 Flatbed Truck Delivery

A front-end loader or backhoe is typically used to remove the rolls from the flatbed truck. Starting from the top rolls on the truck, the core pipe is inserted through the roll core. The core has an inside diameter of 100 mm but may be slightly bowed upon arrival to the job site. In this case, it may be necessary to assist the core pipe insertion process by using the back of the loader bucket to carefully





push the pipe through the core.

After the core pipe has been inserted, straps or chains are looped around each end of the pipe protruding from the roll. The other ends of the chains should be connected to a spreader bar (typically an I-beam) of equal length to the core pipe. The spreader bar itself is suspended from the loader bucket. The purpose of the spreader bar is to prevent the chains from chafing the ends of the roll as it is lifted. It is recommended that the chains or straps be secured by the placing a pin through each end of the pipe. The GCL roll should then be lifted and slowly carried from the flatbed to the temporary storage area.

GCL rolls can also be provided with a pair of slings to facilitate lifting and handling.

#### 3.1.2 Trailer or Container Delivery

The GCL may also be delivered in closed trailers or shipping containers. In these cases, different unloading equipment and techniques must be employed. Because of limited access to the GCL rolls, it is usually necessary to utilize an extendable-boom forklift with a "stinger" attachment. The forklift dealer or manufacturer can provide details on selecting the proper stinger for the type of forklift used at the job site.

The rolls are placed inside the trailer or container in the same way that they are positioned on a flatbed truck. The rolls are removed by inserting the stinger through the roll cores and lifting/pulling the rolls from the trailer/container.

#### 3.2 Materials Handling

The equipment used to unload the GCL from the delivery vehicle may also be used to handle the material on site and to convey it to work areas. All unloading and handling activities must be undertaken with great care to avoid damage to the GCL. The GCL should never be handled in ways that could affect its performance. Some activities to avoid:

- Dropping the rolls from the edge of the delivery truck or container.
- Pushing or pulling the rolls on the ground surface.
- Lifting the roll without a core pipe.
- Bending the rolls by using a core pipe that cannot bear the weight of the roll.
- Forcing a bent core pipe through the core.
- Carrying the GCL over excessively rutted, bumpy terrain, causing the roll to bend and bounce in transit.

Adherence to these common-sense precautions will prevent handling-related damage to the Bentomat.

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The CQA engineer or designee should supervise the unloading and storage operations. It is the duty of the CQA engineer to maintain records of the shipments and to verify that the roll numbers on the labels match the roll numbers on the bills of lading. Any apparent discrepancies should be noted and reported to CETCO.

At this time, all of the rolls should also be visually inspected for damage. Damaged rolls should be clearly marked and set aside where they will not be immediately used. Major damage suspected to have occurred during shipment should *immediately* be reported to the carrier and to CETCO (see Section 4.8.1).

#### 3.3 On-Site Storage

The GCL may be stored at a project site indefinitely, provided that proper storage procedures are followed. First, a dedicated storage area should be identified. This area should be level, dry, well drained, and located away from high-traffic areas of the job site.

For reasons of safety and material integrity, GCL rolls must never be stored on end. Rolls should be stored horizontally, in small stacks not to exceed four rolls in height. It is preferred that the bottom rolls be placed on plywood, on an arrangement of pallets, or on some other man-made surface, to promote drainage and to prevent damage by contact with the ground surface. If the rolls are to be placed directly on the ground, the local ground surface should be carefully prepared and proof-rolled to minimize the potential for damage. It is good practice to cover the stored rolls with a tarpaulin or plastic sheeting for supplemental protection from the elements.

The polyethylene sleeves of the GCL rolls should be examined for any obvious rips or tears. Sleeve damage should be repaired immediately with adhesive tape or additional plastic sheeting. At this time it is also recommended that the labels be examined and taped to the roll if they were displaced in transit.

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## **SECTION 4** INSTALLATION

This section of the CETCO GCL CQA Manual covers the techniques and procedures to be used for ensuring the quality of a GCL installation. Although some installation techniques are described, this section is not an installation guide. Refer instead to CETCO GCL Technical Reference TR-402 for specific GCL installation guidelines. ASTM D 6102 also contains sound GCL installation guidelines.

#### 4.1 Start-Up Assistance

CETCO or its representatives can provide on-site start-up assistance, especially where the installer has no prior GCL installation experience or in which the application is relatively unique. CETCO will work with the on-site engineer and CQA engineer in order to verify that the proper unloading, installation and conformance testing procedures are utilized. CETCO's input is based on extensive experience with GCL installation and on intimate knowledge of the physical characteristics of GCLs. It should be recognized, however, that it is the site engineer's responsibility to implement CETCO's recommendations.

#### 4.2 Equipment

In many projects, the equipment used for unloading the GCL can also be used to install it. Most applications require a vehicle to lift and suspend the roll as it is deployed. Front-end loaders, bulldozers, boom cranes, forklifts, and tracked excavators all have been successfully used for this task. Other, more specialized equipment exists for these operations and may also be used. The equipment for unrolling the GCL should be able to lift the roll and suspend it freely such that it does not chafe against the vehicle or the ground. The vehicle must also have the ability to accommodate a spreader bar above the roll of GCL.

The spreader bar should be sufficiently strong to bear the full weight of the GCL roll without bending. Readily available I-beams or T-beams made of structural steel are typically used for this purpose, although steel pipes have also been successfully used. The chains or straps should be checked for their strength before the installation begins and should continually be inspected for wear as the installation continues.

The core pipe should be of the dimensions and strength indicated in Table 1. It has been CETCO's experience that the schedule of the core pipe is not always an accurate indicator of its strength. The type of steel from which the pipe is made, the presence of a longitudinal weld, and the overall length of the pipe all have an influence on its ability to sustain the weight of the GCL. It is essential that the core pipe does not bend when the full roll of GCL is suspended from it. Lastly, it is recommended that the core pipe have a means to prevent the chains or straps from slipping off the ends of the pipe. This can be accomplished by using pins or clamps.

It will often be necessary to cut the GCL before the end of the roll or to cut it to fit in certain confined areas. Cutting the GCL requires a sharp utility knife. It is very important to maintain the sharpness of the knife blades used for cutting the GCL, in order to prevent tearing its geosynthetic components and damaging the GCL where the cut is made. Frequent blade changes for the utility knives are strongly



recommended.

For construction of the bentonite enhanced overlapped seams of the Bentomat products, an acceptable fillet of bentonite can be poured directly from the bags of granular bentonite supplied with each roll of Bentomat, but a watering can (without a sprinkler head) is easier to use and produces a more controlled seam enhancement. A line chalker, such as those used for marking athletic fields, may also be used.

#### 4.3 Field Conditions

At the beginning of each working day, the CQA engineer should confirm that there are no ambient site conditions which could affect the quality of the installation. Specifically, the presence at the job site of excessively high winds, rain, standing water, or snow may be construed as unsuitable weather for GCL installation. There are no temperature restrictions for installing the GCL, however.

Bentomat is not as susceptible as Claymax to damage due to "premature hydration" (i.e., hydration before a confining stress is applied). Although Bentomat will not delaminate when wetted, CETCO nevertheless recommends that it be installed in dry weather as with Claymax. This lessens the potential for damage to the material and ensures that its integrity is not compromised by the swelling of the bentonite. Should the GCL become prematurely hydrated, it urged that CETCO be contacted in order to recommend a project-specific and product-specific recommendation as to whether the GCL must be removed and replaced. CETCO's Technical Reference TR-312 provides a checklist for evaluating GCL that has been hydrated when no confining pressure is present.

#### 4.4 Site Inspection

Prior to each day's installation activities, the site engineer and/or CQA engineer should inspect the work area to ensure that it has been prepared in accordance with the specification and design drawings. Specifically, the design grades should be verified, the slope length and steepness should be checked, the anchor trench dimensions should be measured, and the subgrade should be inspected and approved. Any deviations from the specifications or design drawings should be noted and rectified before the GCL is installed.

The anchor trench is especially important in applications where slopes are present. The anchor trench must meet or exceed the design dimensions but must also be free of any sharp corners or protrusions which could put excessive stress on the GCL. The CQA engineer must ensure that the anchor trench is as carefully prepared as the rest of the subgrade.

#### 4.5 Panel Placement

The unrolling and placement of the GCL should be performed in such a way that the GCL is not damaged or unduly stretched, folded, or creased. The GCL rolls are typically suspended from the front of the vehicle while it travels backwards along the intended path of placement. During this activity, the roll should be able to rotate freely around the core pipe. Excessive friction due to a bent or large-diameter core pipe, or due to contact between the roll and the deployment equipment, may cause undesirable levels of tension to develop. It is necessary that the GCL be deployed in a fully





relaxed (but not wrinkled) state.

A common deployment technique when the GCL is placed on slopes is to suspend the roll at the top of the slope while several laborers unroll it as they walk downslope. This is an acceptable technique, but the CQA engineer should verify that excessive tension does not develop on the material and that the underside of the panel is not damaged by friction with the subgrade. Unless the subgrade is acceptably smooth, the GCL should be unrolled over an already-placed panel and then moved laterally into its correct position. Flat-bladed vise grips are very useful for handling and moving unrolled panels.

It is important to ensure that, at the top of a slope, the GCL is properly placed in the anchor trench. After confirming that the trench has been constructed according to the specifications, the GCL should be placed in the trench such that it extends across the trench floor but not up the rear wall of the trench. Excess material if any, should be cut off, *not* folded over on top of the existing material. Proper anchorage will be achieved if and only if the GCL is placed within the trench in this manner.

The orientation of the GCL panels is important. When working in sloping areas, the panels should be positioned such that their long dimension is parallel to the direction of the slope. Panels may only be placed across the slope when the slope is less steep than 4H:1V or when the slope length is very short (less than or equal to 3 m).

#### 4.6 Seaming

Proper field seaming is vital for the liner to function to its maximum abilities. There are three elements of CQA for this important task:

- Verification of the minimum acceptable overlap.
- Verification of the continuity of the accessory bentonite (Bentomat only).
- Verification that there is no dirt in the overlap zone or on the bottom geotextile of the overlying GCL panel.

These elements for field seam CQA are straightforward and require only visual inspection by the CQA engineer. The upper surface of the GCL has two heavy dashed lines on both sides of the panel. The lap lines are 150 mm from the edges of the panel, and the match lines are 250 mm from the edges of the panel. The minimum acceptable overlap is 150 mm. Thus, the installer's objective is to place the overlying panel *between* the two lines of the underlying panel. The CQA engineer needs only to visually verify that the 150-mm lap line of the underlying panel is not visible. A properly executed seam, therefore, is verified when three dashed lines (not four) are visible at the overlap, as shown in Figure 1.

The hydraulic performance of Bentomat is maximized when the accessory bentonite is placed *continuously* within the overlap zone. Continuity is best achieved when a watering can or other similar device is used. Pouring the bentonite directly from the bag is less effective in this regard. Verification of continuity should be performed visually by the CQA engineer. The CQA engineer should observe the accessory bentonite as it is being placed within the overlap zone and should give verbal approval of the seam before the overlap is flipped back into place.

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Bentomat ST, DN, and SDN with Supergroove® have self-seaming capabilities in their longitudinal overlaps (Figure 2) and do not require supplemental bentonite. For these Bentomat products, supplemental bentonite is required for the end-of-panel overlapped seams. For pond applications, supplemental bentonite must be used in longitudinal seams regardless of the CETCO GCL used.



Figure 1. Schematic representation of a properly executed Bentomat field seam.



#### Figure 2. Supergroove Bentomat field seam.

Verification of the cleanliness of the overlap is also required, because dirt can enter the overlap and create a conduit for excessive lateral leakage. This is one reason CETCO recommends that the overlying panel is placed and then its edge flipped back to reveal the overlap zone. Exposing the overlap in this manner forces extra attention on the seam and reveals the presence of loose dirt that
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may have inadvertently entered the overlap zone or may have become adhered to the bottom geotextile of the overlying panel. The CQA engineer should either verify that no dirt is present or ensure that the dirt is swept out of the overlap.

Verification of the *amount* of bentonite placed at the seam may be achieved by ensuring that one full 22.5 kg bag of granular bentonite is used for the lateral and longitudinal seaming of each roll of GCL. CETCO recommends that a minimum of 375 grams of granular bentonite be applied per lineal meter of seam. If the installer places bentonite at the rate of one bag per roll, this target application rate will be achieved.

The longitudinal overlap for the GCL should be at least 150 mm (Bentomat) and 300 mm (Claymax). Overlaps at the *ends* of the rolls, however, ("transverse" overlaps) should be at least 300 mm (Bentomat) and 600 mm (Claymax) to account for any incidental loss of bentonite that could occur due to excessive handling of this portion of the roll or to stress relaxation after placement. Overlap distances can be increased if unusual site conditions (such as a soft subgrade, or GCL covered only with geomembrane) exist.

#### 4.7 Detail Work

The term "detail work" refers to the placement of GCL around structures such as vertical walls, gas vents, drainage basins, and pipe penetrations. In all of these cases, it is necessary to utilize granular bentonite or a bentonite mastic to create a seal between the GCL and the structure. CQA of these areas involves a visual inspection of the methods used to make the seal. Specific items requiring inspection include:

- Dimensions of the "notch" excavated around the structure.
- Amount of bentonite applied to the detail
- Condition of the GCL at its cut edge (the cut should be clean, not frayed, with little or no bentonite edge loss from the GCL)
- Integrity of the detail as cover material is placed over and around it.

When cutting the GCL, it is important to ensure that the cut is made where the GCL hangs from the roll or where it rests on the subgrade. The GCL cut should *never* be made on the roll itself or when it rests on any other liner system component.

#### 4.8 Damage and Damage Repair

Even when all reasonable protective measures are taken, the GCL may still become damaged during shipping and handling or during installation. This section provides instructions on assessing and managing the damaged materials.

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#### 4.8.1 Damage From Shipping and Handling

Occasionally, a GCL roll will arrive at a job site with its protective plastic sleeve torn due to movement during transit. This roll should be inspected for damage in the area where the sleeve was torn. If the geotextile under the torn sleeve is also torn, The outermost wrap of GCL on the roll should be unwound and discarded when the roll is installed. It is not necessary to consider the entire roll unusable. It is important, however, to mark the roll in order to alert the installer that the initial wrap should be cut away and discarded, because the damaged geotextile may be hidden from view when the GCL is unrolled. It is remotely possible that further layers of GCL on the roll could be similarly damaged. If this happens, additional wraps may be unrolled and discarded prior to placement.

Damage due to poor handling may occur as a result of accidentally dropping a suspended roll onto the ground or using weak core pipes that bend when the GCL is lifted. These activities can cause damage not just to the outer wrap of GCL but to the entire roll. If such damage occurs, the rolls should be clearly marked and moved away from the storage area. The CQA engineer should ensure that procedures are immediately implemented in order to prevent the recurrence of this problem. The CQA engineer should also contact CETCO to help make a determination as to whether the mishandled GCL is acceptable for use on the project.

#### 4.8.2 Damage From Installation Activities

The more commonly observed incidents of damage occur during installation, as a result of inadvertent contact by heavy equipment. Because this type of damage will potentially have the largest overall effect on the integrity of the liner system, CETCO strongly recommends that equipment operating on or near the GCL *be monitored continuously.* 

Equipment operators should be made fully aware of the importance of their actions and should be encouraged to notify the CQA engineer directly if they suspect at any time that the liner may have become damaged by their equipment. Close communication among everyone involved in the installation will help to ensure that this type of damage is reported and repaired.

Repeated passes by loaded dump trucks over GCL, which has minimal cover, can cause damage. It is therefore preferred to prevent potential for such damage by placing the GCL over these high-traffic areas *after* cover material delivery is largely completed. If this is not possible, then extra cover should be placed over high-traffic areas. At least 600-900 mm of screened, cohesive soil is recommended.

Should damage occur to the already-installed GCL, the following procedures should be followed:

- 1. Remove equipment from the damaged area and notify the CQA engineer.
- 2. *Manually* clean away all cover material within a 600-mm radius of the damaged area. Use a broom to sweep away the remaining dirt in order to make the area as clean as possible.
- 3. If necessary, repair the subgrade to its original conditions. Replace the torn/damaged GCL as closely as possible to its original position.
- 4. Place a bead of granular bentonite or bentonite paste at the minimum rate of 500 g per lineal meter around the damaged area.
- 5. Cut a patch of new GCL to fit over the damaged area and extending 600 mm beyond it.

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6. Place the patch over the damaged area and carefully backfill over the patch.

Note that it is necessary only to repair the damaged portion of the GCL. It is usually not necessary to remove and replace the entire panel, unless the damage has occurred on a slope. In this case, slope stability may be compromised and the site engineer should be contacted to help determine whether a repair is acceptable.

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### SECTION 5 PLACEMENT OF COVER MATERIALS

As mentioned previously, the proper placement of cover on the GCL is crucial to the overall success of the installation. This section of the Bentomat CQA manual includes recommended materials and procedures, which will help to ensure that the integrity of the GCL is not compromised when it is covered.

Regardless of the nature of the cover material used, it should be placed as soon as possible after the GCL has been deployed. The efforts of placing the GCL and placing the final cover should be coordinated to the extent that only as much GCL as can be covered should be deployed in one working day. This will prevent premature hydration and will greatly reduce the chances for incidental damage to the GCL during other activities.

#### 5.1 Soil/Stone Cover

When a GCL is the sole liner system component, soil or stone cover *must* be placed over it to provide protection from physical damage, erosional forces, and degradation by UV light. The presence of cover also provides a confining stress, which allows the overlapped seam to perform properly and enhances the long-term physical integrity of the material. Lastly, the cover may provide a base for vehicular traffic. Because it serves so many functions, proper placement and CQA of the soil/stone cover is essential.

Frequently used cover materials include sand, gravel, crushed stone, and common earth fill. Regardless of the type of material selected for the cover, it should be free of large stones (greater than 50 mm in diameter), sticks, and any other materials, which could cause puncture or tearing. The source of all cover material should be identified in order to ascertain its suitability well in advance of the installation.

In addition to particle size, the *angularity* of a crushed stone or gravel will impact the construction survivability of the GCL. It is preferred that relatively rounded materials be utilized. If these materials are not available, then extra caution must be taken during cover placement. Dumping the cover from a loader bucket positioned high above the GCL is unacceptable. The cover should be gently placed from as low a height as possible. Vehicular traffic should also be restricted if particularly angular or abrasive material is used. If there is some doubt as to the suitability of a potential cover material, a representative sample should be submitted to CETCO for analysis.

With respect to the equipment used to place the protective cover, it is strongly recommended that no heavy equipment come in direct contact with the GCL. Obviously, tracked equipment will damage the liner. In some cases, however it is necessary to drive equipment directly on the GCL. This can be accomplished with low-pressure, *rubber-tired* equipment. Permission to do so will be granted by CETCO through the CQA engineer on a case-by-case basis *only* and will include restrictions on the equipment itself and on the type of movements the vehicle may make on the GCL.

The chemical nature of the cover soil must also be considered. The use of fine-grained, calcareous soil or stone is strongly discouraged due to the potential for an adverse reaction with the sodium



bentonite contained in the GCL.

The cover material placed as backfill in the anchor trench should be of the same quality as the rest of the backfill. It is especially important that the anchor trench backfill be compacted either by hand tamping or by the use of a small walk-behind compactor. Compaction should be performed over each 150-mm lift of backfill placed in the anchor trench.

#### 5.2 Geosynthetic Cover

A geomembrane or other geosynthetic liner system component is often placed over the GCL. Caution must be used during this activity to prevent GCL damage. Again, it is strongly recommended that no heavy equipment directly contact the GCL, but exceptions can be made on a project-specific basis.

A special precaution should be taken when textured geomembrane is installed directly over the GCL in a composite liner system. Because considerable friction may develop between the geomembrane and the GCL, it is difficult to pull the geomembrane into position for welding to adjacent sheets. A smooth "slip sheet" can be used to provide a low-friction sliding surface for the geomembrane until it is in position for welding.

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# SECTION 6 CONFORMANCE TESTING

Conformance testing is necessary in order to verify that the materials installed meet the requirements set forth in the specification. Although CETCO performs regular testing on its GCLs as part of its manufacturing QA/QC program, the engineer may require additional testing at the job site. This section lists several tests, which may be utilized to verify the quality of the delivered materials and the quality of the installation of those materials.

#### 6.1 Bentonite Mass Per Unit Area

A relatively simple test to verify that the specified amount of bentonite has been encapsulated in the GCL is to measure the bentonite mass per unit area of representative samples cut from delivered rolls. The results of this test may be used in conjunction with the results of the bentonite swell test described in Section 6.2 to arrive at an indirect verification of the hydraulic performance of the GCL.

ASTM D 5993 provides procedures for performing the mass per unit area test. After the correction for geotextile mass is made, there should be at least 3,600 g of bentonite contained within the GCL per square meter. This is CETCO's minimum average roll value (MARV) for bentonite content of all of its GCLs. These values are always subject to change, so please refer to GCL Technical Reference No. TR-404 for the most recent list of certified physical GCL properties.

If for any reason the resulting mass per unit area values do not meet the required MARVs, the corresponding rolls should be set-aside for additional inspection and testing. CETCO should be notified to assist in resolving the problem if it persists.

#### 6.2 Bentonite Swell Index and Fluid Loss

The swell index and fluid loss of the bentonite are two of the most important indicators of its ability to function as a barrier material. ASTM D 5890 provides a detailed free swell testing procedure used by CETCO. CETCO's MARV requirement for the bentonite is 24 mL/2g. ASTM D5891 provides a detailed fluid loss testing procedure. CETCO's maximum requirement for fluid loss of the bentonite is 18 ml. As with the mass per unit area test described in Section 6.1, if these values are not achieved in conformance testing, the corresponding rolls should be set aside for additional inspection and testing. CETCO should be notified to assist in resolving the problem if it persists.

#### 6.3 Other Conformance Tests

Other conformance tests may be conducted at the request of the on-site engineer or the CQA engineer on a project specific basis. ASTM D6495 suggests grab tensile strength and index flux/permeability (as per ASTM D 5887), although it should be cautioned that rapid "real-time" results of index flux/permeability are not possible due to the time required to achieve steady-state permeability values. Thus, it is difficult to use permeability testing as a pass/fail criterion for GCL acceptance at the job site.

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Also, the laminated GCLs are not easily tested for index flux/permeability due to potential sidewall leakage around the membrane. CETCO has a special setup procedure for its laminated GCLs in TR-302.

Lastly, it should be recognized that field-scale test pads and infiltrometer tests are typically *not* performed in GCL projects. This contrasts with compacted clay liner (CCL) projects, in which, for two reasons, field-scale data is almost always required. First, field data for CCL projects is necessary because there are many variables involved in their construction (compactor weight, speed, number of passes; soil type; moisture content; lift thickness; etc.). It is therefore necessary to build a test pad to ensure that the construction materials and methods intended for the project will provide the required level of performance. Second, laboratory test results and field test results may vary significantly with CCLs due to the difficulties in retrieving representative, undisturbed samples. This factor also warrants that field data be obtained for CCL projects.

With GCL installations, however, there are very few construction-related variables. Additionally, the GCL that is tested for permeability in the laboratory is the *same* material deployed in the field. For this reason, a GCL such as Bentomat or Claymax does not require a field permeability test.

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# SECTION 7 DOCUMENTATION

Thorough documentation of all CQA activities and tests is necessary in order to provide a written record that the GCL has been properly installed. The CQA documentation package for a GCL installation should include the following items:

- Bills of lading and corresponding packing list confirming receipt of all GCL installed at the site.
- A panel layout drawing in which the GCL roll numbers are keyed to their location in the field. Locations where damage was encountered and repaired should also be marked.
- The roll numbers from which samples were taken for conformance tests, along with the results of those tests.
- A daily report or diary of the activities undertaken at the site during construction.
- Certification that the requirements for the subgrade and for the cover material were achieved.
- A compilation of all CQA checklists completed during the installation.
- The manufacturing quality control (MQC) certification and accompanying test data.
- A description of deviations, if any, made to the original CQA plan during the installation.
- Photographs of the GCL during installation.

CETCO provides the MQC certification. All other items on the above list are the responsibility of the CQA engineer.

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#### APPENDIX A

#### List of Applicable ASTM Standards

#### ASTM D 5887, "Standard Test Method for Measurement of the Index Flux Through Saturated Geosynthetic Clay Liner Specimens Using a Flexible Wall Permeameter," *Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol. 4.09,* American Society for Testing and Materials, W. Conshohocken, PA.

This method describes the specimen preparation, stress and gradient conditions, and testing procedures to be used for determining the flux (flow per unit area) through GCLs. Adherence to the specimen preparation procedures presented will help to minimize sidewall leakage, a common problem when testing thin barriers. This is an index test designed to determine product acceptability and uses a maximum confining stress of 35 kPa (5 psi) and a hydraulic gradient of 14 kPa (2 psi).

# ASTM D 5888, "Standard Guide for Storage and Handling of Geosynthetic Clay Liners," *Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol. 4.09,* American Society for Testing and Materials, W. Conshohocken, PA.

This is a guide for the safe handling of GCL rolls at a job site, identifying the equipment and techniques typically employed to unload the material from delivery trucks and to place it in a dedicated storage area. Procedures are also presented for proper storage of the GCL in order to minimize the potential for product damage while in storage.

# ASTM D 5889, "Standard Practice for Quality Control of Geosynthetic Clay Liners," *Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol. 4.09,* American Society for Testing and Materials, W. Conshohocken, PA.

Test methods and testing frequencies are presented for manufacturing quality control (MQC) of GCLs. This standard practice includes conformance tests to be performed on the GCL components (bentonite and geotextiles and/or geomembranes) as well as tests to be performed on the finished GCL product. Special procedures for GCL permeability/flux testing require the manufacturer to provide an historical database to demonstrate the consistency of the hydraulic performance of the finished product and to justify the reduced need for frequent MQA permeability testing.

#### ASTM D 5890, "Standard Test Method for Swell Index Measurement of Clay Mineral Component of Geosynthetic Clay Liners," *Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol. 4.09*, American Society for Testing and Materials, W. Conshohocken, PA.

This test method was adapted from the basic elements of a swell test presented in the USP/NF (United States Pharmacopeia/National Formulary). Two grams of dried and powdered bentonite are slowly dropped into a graduate cylinder containing 100 mL of distilled water. The swell value in mL is recorded after 24 hours, by reading the value on the graduate cylinder at the clay/water interface.

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## APPENDIX A (continued) List of Applicable ASTM Standards

# ASTM D 5891, "Standard Test Method for Measurement of Fluid Loss of Clay Mineral Component of Geosynthetic Clay Liners."

This test method was adapted from the API (American Petroleum Institute) Procedure 13A/13B for bentonite. A bentonite slurry is created, aged, and then filtered in a pressurized cell. The amount of water passing through the filter cake in a specified time interval is recorded as the filtrate loss or fluid loss. The test indicates the clay's general ability to function as a barrier to liquids.

# ASTM D 5993, "Standard Test Method for Measuring the Mass per Unit Area of Geosynthetic Clay Liners."

This test method describes how to measure the bentonite mass per unit area of a GCL sample. A GCL specimen of a certain minimum area is weighed, oven-dried, and weighed again. The dry weight of the specimen, minus the nominal weight of the geosynthetic component(s), is then divided by the area of the specimen. The moisture content of the specimen is determined by subtracting the dry weight from the wet weight.

#### ASTM D 6072, "Standard Guide for Obtaining Samples of Geosynthetic Clay Liners."

Presents procedures for obtaining representative samples of GCL material for laboratory testing purposes. These samples may be obtained either at the factory or in the field. Procedures for packaging and protecting the sample are also included to prevent the possibility of damage in transit to the laboratory.

#### ASTM D 6102, "Standard Guide for Installation of Geosynthetic Clay Liners."

Provides detailed recommendations for the proper installation of GCLs. Discusses the necessary site conditions, equipment, and techniques for installing GCLs without damaging them. Includes recommendations on panel placement, overlaps, and special considerations for slopes. Also discusses the preferred types of soil cover and equipment used to apply this cover.

# ASTM D 6243, "Standard Test Method for Determining the Internal and Interface Shear Resistance of Geosynthetic Clay Liner by the Direct Shear Method."

This test method covers a procedure for determining the internal shear resistance of a GCL or the interface shear resistance between the GCL and an adjacent material under a constant rate of displacement or constant stress.

#### ASTM D 6496, "Standard Test Method for Determining Average Bonding Peel Strength Between Top and Bottom Layers of Needle-Punched Geosynthetic Clay Liners."

This test method was adapted from ASTM D 4632 for grab strength testing of geotextiles. The method covers the laboratory determination of the average bonding strength between the top and bottom layers of a sample of a GCL. These results provide an indication of a GCL's internal reinforcement and internal shear strength.



### APPENDIX A (continued) List of Applicable ASTM Standards

#### ASTM D 6768, "Standard Test Method for Tensile Strength of Geosynthetic Clay Liners."

This test method was adapted from ASTM D 4632 for grab strength testing of geotextiles. The test method establishes the procedures for the measurement of tensile strength of a GCL. This test method is strictly an index test method to be used to verify the tensile strength of GCLs. Results from this test method should not be considered as an indication of actual or long-term performance of the geosynthetic in field applications.

# ASTM D 6495, "Standard Guide for Acceptance Testing Requirements for Geosynthetic Clay Liners".

Provides guidelines for acceptance testing requirements for GCLs, including test methods and verifications.

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#### **APPENDIX B**

#### **CETCO GCL Construction Quality Assurance Checklist**

Project Name/Number:\_\_\_\_\_

CQA Inspector:

Date:	Weather:				
	STORAGE AREA				
Rolls cov Rolls lab No stanc Packagir Accesso	vered/tarped eled ding water present ng intact/repaired ry bentonite protected	INSTALLATION EQUIPMENT Core pipe straight Spreader bar straight Chains/Straps inspected Knife blades replaced Seaming clay supply available			
MAT	ERIALS RECEIVED TODAY				
Packagir Rolls ins none fou Damage roll numb damage	ng intact pected for damage ind suspected (indicate pers and nature of	C Bentonite Mass/A Bentomat Roll No.	CONFORMANCE TESTI Inrea: Bentonite (g/sm)	NG Pass/ Fail?	
	SITE INSPECTION	Bentonite Swell:			
Subgrad	e surface acceptable on area dry renches acceptable grades achieved bil acceptable (as applicable)	Bentomat Roll No.	Final Swell Value (mL/2g)	Pass/ Fail?	
	INSTALLATION				
Number of rolls deployed today         (attach list of roll numbers)         Anchor trench fill compacted         Min. seam overlap achieved         All seams visually inspected         Seam bentonite added (as applicable)		NOTES/OBSERVATIONS			
Downslo All mat c Storage	pe panel orientation covered at end of day area maintained				

#### NOTE:

This checklist is intended to serve as a *guideline* for the CQA engineer to use in the development of a projectspecific or company-specific CQA plan. The checklist is not all-inclusive. The items presented in this list are those that CETCO feels are the most important for the proper installation of Bentomat.

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