USDA NRCS

United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Sandbag Barrier

FACT SHEET **MONTANA**

What is a Sandbag Barrier?

A **Sandbag Barrier** is an inexpensive, temporary barrier or wall, one to two feet high, that is constructed by stacking sand-filled or earth-filled sandbags and placing them to divert mud and other debris flows away from buildings. These barriers do not provide protection from high debris flows.

When is a Sandbag Barrier used?

These barriers are used to protect building sites vulnerable to low mud debris flows from steep, erodible slopes that are partially or completely void of vegetation due to wildfire burns. This is an inexpensive, temporary protection method that can be used by home-owners before predicted rainfall. Sandbags deteriorate when exposed to continued wetting and drying for several months. If the bags need to be used for more than a few months, cement can be mixed with the sand. The cement and sand mixture will harden when the bags dry.

How is a Sandbag Barrier installed?

Filling Bags

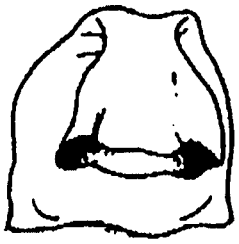
- Fill sandbags half full.
- Use sand, if available, or local soil.
- Fold the top of the sandbag down.
- Place the bag on its folded top.

(see illustration)

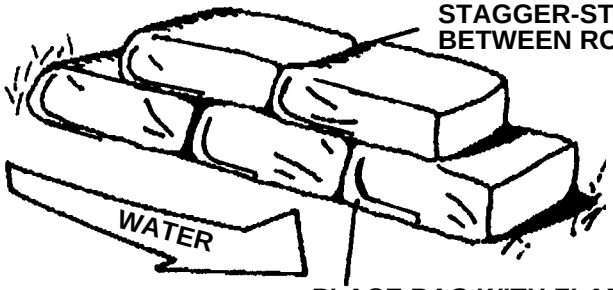
Placing Bags. Refer to the illustration. Place each sandbag as shown, finishing each layer before starting the next. Limit placement to two layers unless they are stacked against a building or sandbags are pyramided. It is important to place the bags with the folded top in the upstream or uphill direction facing the flow of water to prevent them from opening when water runs by.

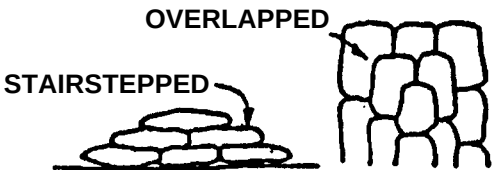
August 2000

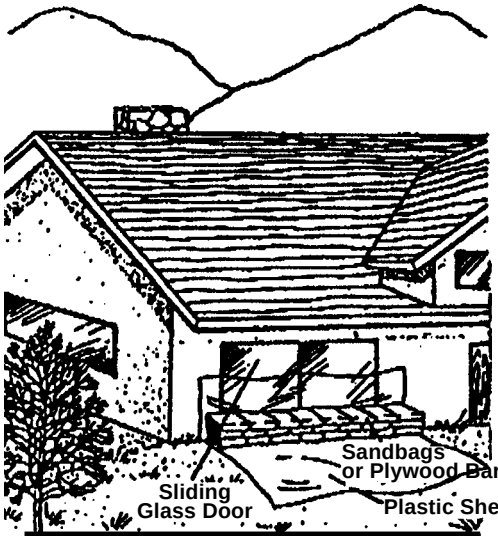
SANDBAG FILLING AND PLACEMENT



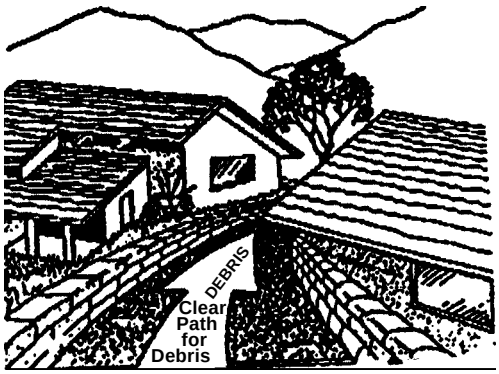
FILL HALF FULL
FOLD TOP UNDER



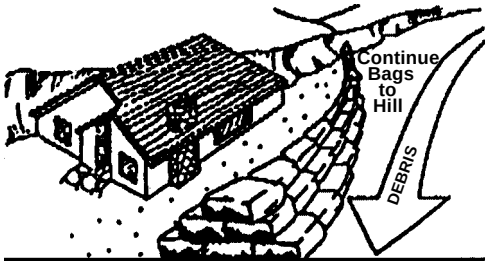




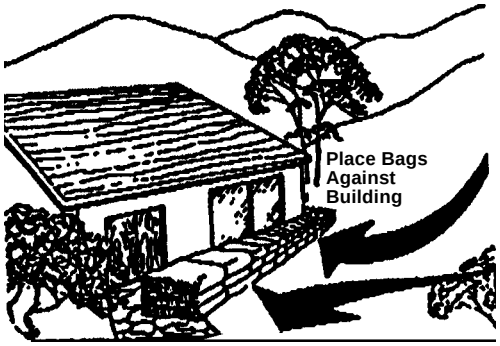
SLIDING GLASS DOOR SEALING
Control of flows to prevent seeping into sliding glass door



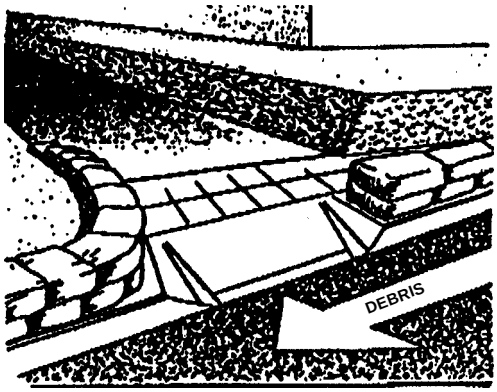
DIRECTING FLOWS BETWEEN BUILDINGS



DIRECTING DEBRIS AWAY FROM BUILDING



BUILDING PROTECTION



CONTROLLING DEBRIS/STORM FLOWS IN STREETS

NOTE: After a fire many trees are weakened from burning around the base of the trunk. The **trees can fall over or blow down without warning.** Shallow rooted trees can also fall. Therefore **be extremely alert when around burned trees**.

Data for this fact sheet was provided by NRCS, Davis, California.