

INSTALLATION GUIDELINE

# PROPEX Pyramat for slopes



# Contents

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>1. Introduction</b>                         | <b>3</b> |
| <b>2. Before installation</b>                  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>3. Installation: site preparation</b>       | <b>3</b> |
| <b>4. PROPEX Pyramat laydown</b>               | <b>4</b> |
| <b>5. Vegetation establishment</b>             | <b>6</b> |
| <b>6. Project specific considerations</b>      | <b>8</b> |
| <b>7. Short-term and long-term maintenance</b> | <b>8</b> |

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for purchasing **PROPEX**® Pyramat® 75 High Performance Turf Reinforcement Mat (HPTRM) or **PROPEX** Pyramat 25 Turf Reinforcement Mat (TRM) by Solmax. This document provides installation and maintenance guidelines for **PROPEX** Pyramat used as slope armoring to increase earthen slope resiliency. **PROPEX** Pyramat provides permanent erosion protection on either the flood side and/ or protected side of an earthen slope.

Temporary securing pins are used during installation to hold **PROPEX** Pyramat in place. Pins also promote vegetation establishment keeping **PROPEX** Pyramat in intimate contact with the soil.

**PROPEX** Pyramat is an **Engineered Earth Armoring Solution**® with a unique design for each specific project. While Solmax has made every effort to ensure general validity, this information should not be used for a specific application without independent professional examination and verification of its suitability, applicability, and accuracy. The information provided herein is for general information only, and is intended to present installation guidance. Project specific contract documents take precedence when pin placements are different than what is represented in this document. Depending upon the critical nature of the structure to be armored, work restrictions may be in place such as limiting work based on growing seasons, weather patterns, etc. Work should be performed under the provisions set forth for the specific project. Solmax engineering services is available for support during installation to consult for solving constructability issues encountered in specific applications. Please feel free to contact our technical support at [smatch@solmax.com](mailto:smatch@solmax.com) or 706-693-2226.

## 2. BEFORE INSTALLATION

- 1. Coordinate with a Solmax representative:** A pre-construction meeting is suggested with the construction team and a representative from Solmax prior to installation. This meeting should be scheduled by the contractor with at least a two week notice.
- 2. Gather the tools needed:** Tools that you will need to install **PROPEX** Pyramat include a pair of industrial shears to cut **PROPEX** Pyramat, tape measure, and mallet or mallet, hammer, or palm driver to install securing pins.
- 3. Determine how to establish vegetation:** The method of vegetation establishment should be determined prior to the start of installation. Different vegetation establishment methods require different orders of installation. Refer to vegetation establishment for further guidance.

## 3. INSTALLATION: SITE PREPARATION

It is recommended during all stages of site preparation that disturbed soils remain unprotected for not more than a single day. Depending on project size this may require progressive site preparation during installation.

1. Grade and compact the area on the slope where **PROPEX** Pyramat will be installed. The slope surface should be uniform and smooth, having all rocks, clods, vegetation or other objects removed so that during **PROPEX** Pyramat laydown, the material comes in direct, intimate contact with the slope surface.
2. Prepare the area to be armored with **PROPEX** Pyramat by loosening the topsoil to promote better vegetation establishment. This may be accomplished with a rotary tiller on slopes 3:1 or flatter. For slopes greater than 3:1, prepare topsoil in a safe manner.
3. Excavate a Crest of Slope (COS) trench 12 in x 12 in (300 mm x 300 mm) minimum at a distance of 3 ft (900 mm) from the crest of the slope (Figure 1).

- Excavate a Toe of Slope (TOS) trench 12 in x 12 in (300 mm x 300 mm) at a minimum distance of 5 ft (1.5 m) from the toe of the slope (Figure 2).
- If seeding, refer to vegetation establishment for additional considerations during site preparation.

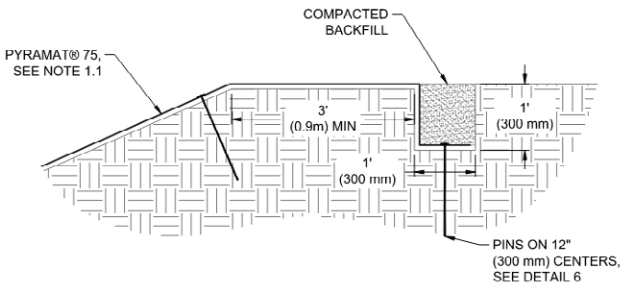


Figure 1: Crest of Slope (COS) trench

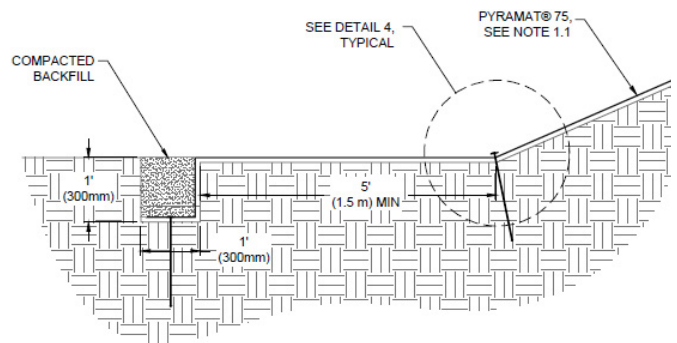


Figure 2: Toe of Slope (TOS) trench

## 4. PROPEX PYRAMAT LAYDOWN

- Begin the **PROPEX** Pyramat laydown process by starting with the downstream/downwind end of the site. To ensure proper pinning of the overlapped areas the proceeding roll width must be laid out before the current roll width can be pinned with exception to the final roll width. For straight sections of a slope, **PROPEX** Pyramat panel lengths should be long enough to construct COS and TOS trenches while also covering the surface of the slope being armored (Figure 12). Panel edges should rest approximately perpendicular to the slope center line. For best results, panels of **PROPEX** Pyramat should be continuous and free from seams or roll end overlaps that are parallel to the centerline of the slope. Panel edge overlapping should follow a pattern of placing each proceeding panel's edge over top the previous panel edge, shingling the panels in the direction of the water flow or prevailing wind.
- Starting at the COS trench, lay the **PROPEX** Pyramat roll so that the roll ends point towards the crest of the slope (Figure 3), with a 3 in (75 mm) overlap created at adjacent panel edge locations. Ensure that adjacent panel edges maintain a minimum 3 in (75 mm) overlap during the material laydown (Figure 8).

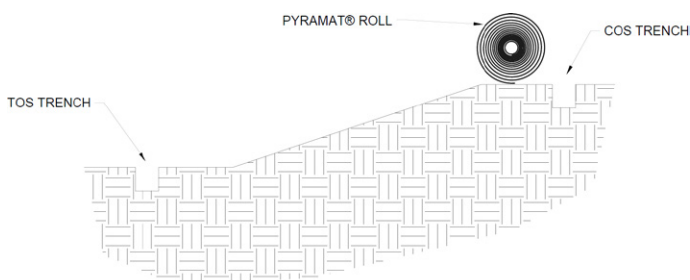


Figure 3: Crest of Slope (COS) trench alignment

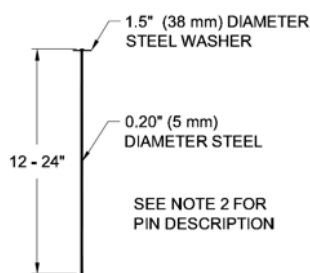


Figure 4: Securing pin

- Secure **PROPEX** Pyramat with pins in the COS trench. Pins should be made of steel with a 0.20 in (5 mm) minimum diameter, having a 1.5 in (38 mm) diameter washer at the head, and a length between 12 and 24 in (300-600 mm) with sufficient ground penetration to resist pullout (Figure 4). Longer pins may be required for looser soils. Heavier metal stakes may be required in rocky soils. Suggested placement of pins for the COS trench is along the bottom of the trench with pins on 12 in (300 mm) centers. Pins should also be installed on panel edge overlaps in the COS trench.
- Backfill and compact the COS trench in the location of the first panel only (Figure 5).

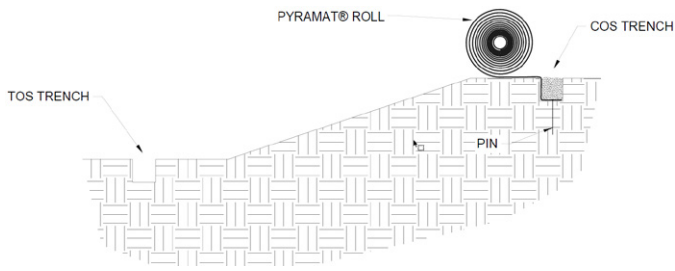


Figure 5: Crest of Slope (COS) trench replacement

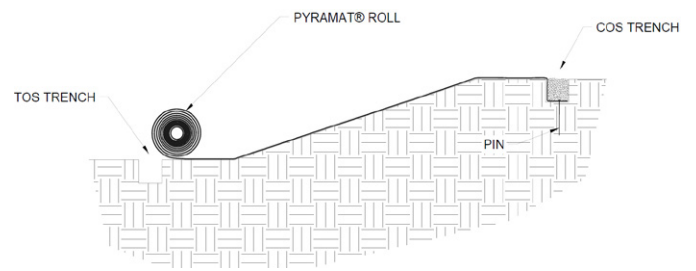


Figure 6: Placement of PROPER Pyramat across slope

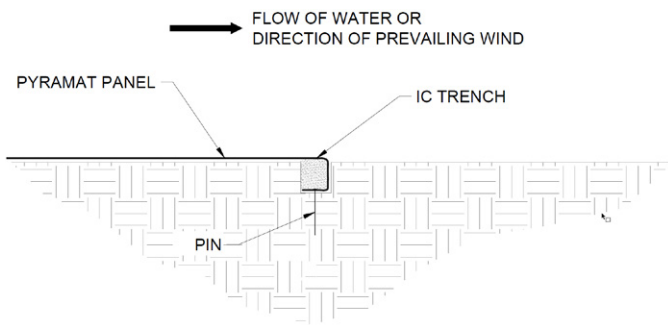
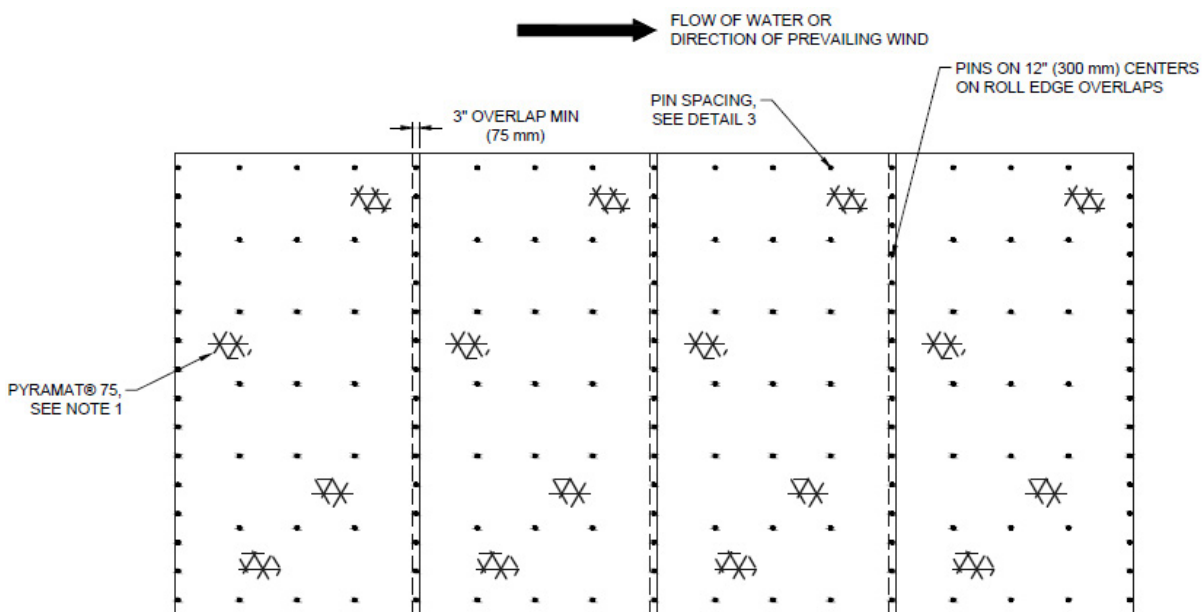


Figure 7: Example pin pattern

5. Unroll the material roll on the slope surface in the area to be armored (Figure 6). Ensure that **PROPEX** Pyramat has intimate contact with the ground and all irregular surfaces beneath it are removed.
6. Secure **PROPEX** Pyramat panels in place using pins across the slope surface according to the project's engineered design. Pin placement should reflect a checkerboard pattern across the slope surface for best results (Figure 7 and Figure 8).

- The leading edge of the first panel should be secured on the Slope Armoring Edge (SAE) with pins on 12 in (300 mm) centers.
- Roll edges shall be overlapped a minimum of 3 in (75 mm) and a maximum of 6 in (150 mm) with pins placed on 12 in (300 mm) centers (Figure 8).
- Roll ends shall be overlapped a minimum of 6 in (150 mm) with upstream / upwind panel on top. Secure roll end overlaps with two rows of pins staggered 6 in (150 mm) apart on 12 in (300 mm) centers (Figure 9).
- For slope lengths greater than 45 ft (13.7 m), install simulated check slots. This method includes placing two rows of pins 12 in (300 mm) apart on 12 in (300 mm) centers at 45 ft (13.7 m) maximum intervals or across the midpoint of the slope for slope lengths less than 60 ft (18.2 m) (Figure 10).
- At the break in slope interface towards the TOS, it is suggested that pins be installed on 12 in (300 mm) centers (Figure 11).



• PIN, SEE DETAIL 5

Figure 8: Example of panel overlap

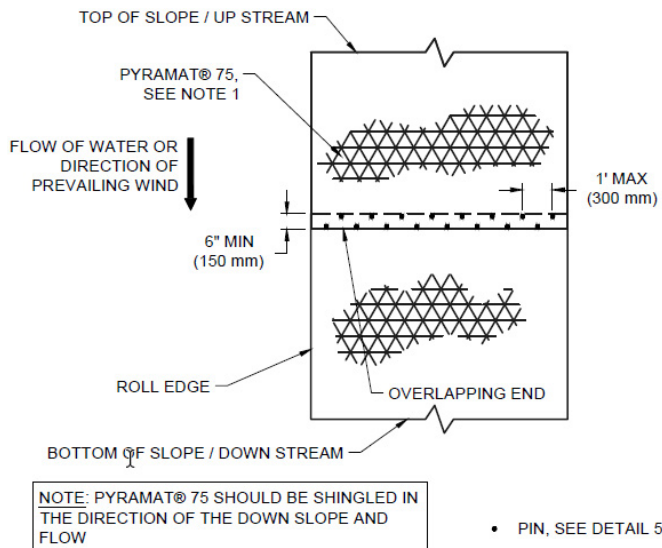


Figure 9: Roll end overlap

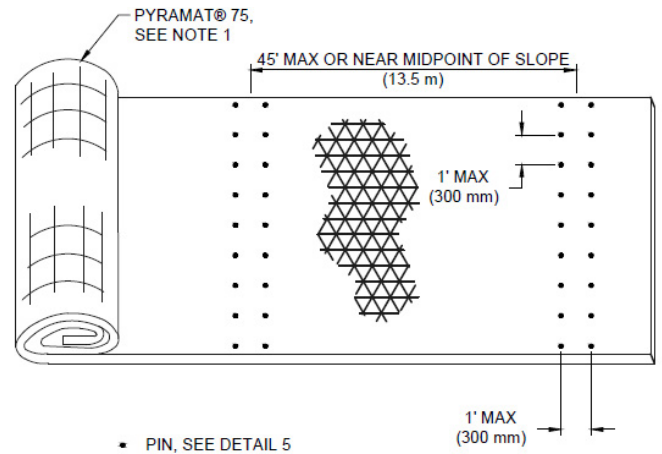


Figure 10: Simulated check slot

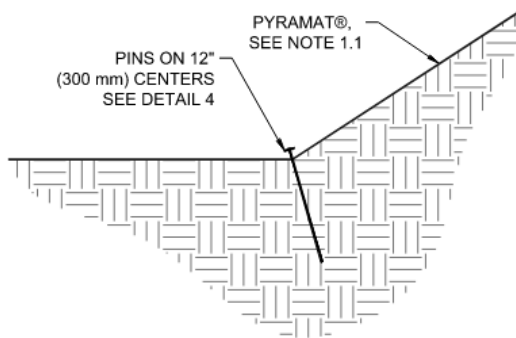


Figure 11: Break in slope interface

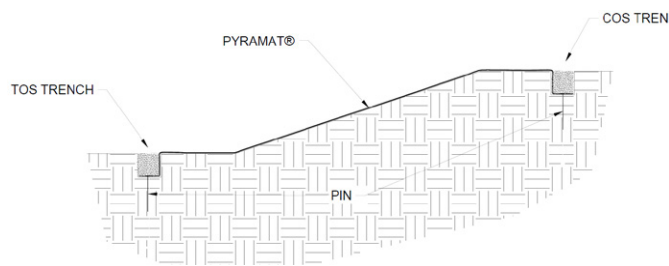


Figure 12: Crest of Slope (COS) trench and Toe of Slope (TOS) Trench complete

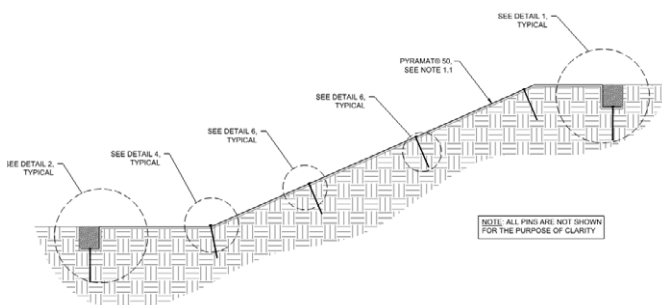


Figure 13: Completed slope elevation view

- Secure **PROPEX** Pyramat with pins in the TOS trench. Suggested placement of pins for the TOS trench is along the bottom of the trench with pins on 12 in (300 mm) centers (Figure 12).
- Backfill and compact the TOS trench (Figure 12).
- Continue to work down the length of the slope by repeating steps 1 through 8 overlapping each adjacent panel by 3 in (75 mm) (Figure 8). The last panel should terminate on the Slope Armoring Edge (SAE) with pins on 12 in (300 mm) centers. At a minimum, panels should be pinned entirely across the slope surface, pins should be installed in the trenches, and the trenches should be backfilled and compacted at the end of each day to minimize rework in the case of a major rain event. Specific project conditions may warrant further evaluation of installation order for ease. An example elevation view (Figure 13) of a slope armored with **PROPEX** Pyramat can be seen below for overall reference. Consult Solmax engineering services at (800) 621-1273 with any questions that you may have.

## 5. VEGETATION ESTABLISHMENT

Vegetation can be established with **PROPEX** Pyramat by broadcast seeding, hydraulic seed application (hydroseeding), or sodding. Seed application rate, seed type, sod type, and irrigation rate should be selected based on local or site specific knowledge and time of year. For best results, consider having a site specific soil test performed to help determine what soil amendments, such as lime and fertilizer, need to be incorporated into the soil to promote healthy vegetation.

### **With seed**

1. After conducting a site specific soil test, select and apply recommended soil amendments to the soil surface and then loosen/scarify the top 2 to 3 in (50 to 75 mm) of the soil surface.
2. Sow 25-35% of the total permanent seed mixture to prepared seedbed. Note this seed amount is in addition to the 100% total seed mixture being applied in Step 5.
3. Install the **PROPEX** Armormax®.
4. Soil-fill the **PROPEX** Armormax with 1-2 in (25-50 mm) of amended topsoil or fill with a biotic soil media. Do not place excessive soil above the **PROPEX** Armormax material.
5. Sow 100% of the permanent seed mixture and rake into place to ensure good contact between seed and soil.
6. Install surficial protection with **PROPEX** Landlok® S2 Erosion Control Blanket (ECB).

### **With SOD**

1. After conducting a site specific soil test, select and apply recommended soil amendments to the soil surface and then loosen/scarify the top 2 to 3 inches (50 to 75 mm) of the soil surface prior to installation of the **PROPEX** Armormax.
2. Install the **PROPEX** Armormax on the scarified surface.
3. Place sod on top of the **PROPEX** Armormax. Sod should be pinned/stapled into place to prevent displacement.
4. Optional: If there is less than 1 in (< 25 mm) of topsoil included with the sod, it is recommended that a 0.5 in (12 mm) to 1 in (25 mm) of additional amended topsoil should be placed on top of the **PROPEX** Armormax prior to placement of the sod.
5. Irrigate as necessary to establish and maintain vegetation until the desired vegetated density has been achieved. Frequent, light irrigation will need to be applied to seeded areas if natural rain events have not occurred within two weeks of seeding.

### **With hydroseed**

1. After conducting a site specific soil test, select and apply recommended soil amendments to the soil surface and the loosen/scarify the top 2 to 3 in (50 to 75 mm) of the soil surface.
2. Sow 25%-35% of the total permanent seed mixture to prepared seedbed. Note this seed amount is in addition to the 100% total seed mixture being applied in Step 5.
3. Install the **PROPEX** Armormax.
4. Soil-fill the **PROPEX** Armormax with 1-2 in (25-50 mm) of amended topsoil or fill with a biotic soil media. Do not place excessive soil above the **PROPEX** Armormax material.
5. Apply 100% of the total permanent seed mixture onto the topsoil/ biotic media with a hydroseed mixture that contains the soil amendments and a tackifier or with a bonded fiber matrix mixture per manufacturer's recommendations.
6. Optional Step for additional protection: Install surficial protection with **PROPEX** Landlok S2 Erosion Control Blanket (ECB).
7. Irrigate as necessary to establish and maintain vegetation until the desired vegetated density has been achieved. Frequent, light irrigation will need to be applied to seeded areas if natural rain events have not occurred within two weeks of seeding. When watering seeded areas, use a fine spray to prevent erosion of seeds or soil. Do not over irrigate. Proper irrigation guidance is provided under the maintenance portion of this document.

## 6. PROJECT SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

1. For applications that require special transitions (i.e. connections to riprap, concrete, T-walls, etc.), refer to the project specific drawings or consult with Solmax engineering services at (800) 621-1273.
2. A deeper terminal trench and/or hard armoring may be required when slopes have severe scour potential at the toe location.
3. For installing **PROPEX** Pyramat panels around curved sections of a slope, trim panels at an angle so that no more than two layers of materials overlap at any point in time. Additional pins may be needed to secure panel edges towards the toe of the slope depending upon the radius of the curved slope. Install pins as necessary to securely fasten **PROPEX** the material to the ground.
4. Allowable vehicle traffic:
  - A. If using equipment on **PROPEX** Pyramat, it should be of the rubber-tired type and should avoid sharp turns. Tracked equipment is not permitted to drive over the material without vegetation at any time.
  - B. Avoid any traffic over **PROPEX** Pyramat if loose or wet soil conditions exist.
5. Disturbed areas should be reseeded. If ruts or depressions develop for any reason, rework soil until smooth and reseed such areas.

## 7. SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE

The purpose of this section is to provide some general guidelines for performing short-term and long-term maintenance of **PROPEX** Pyramat with respect to maintaining vegetation reinforced with **PROPEX** Pyramat, and patching of **PROPEX** Pyramat (in the event it needs to be removed or replaced). These procedures are to be considered minimum guidelines for proper maintenance, and further maintenance techniques may be appropriate considering local practices and procedures.

### 1. PROPEX Pyramat protected slopes

For **PROPEX** Pyramat to be most effective, it is important to ensure that it is properly maintained both during construction and after construction. Identifying trouble areas is easy with the materials, and it can make identifying potential threats much simpler and manageable. Look for areas with sparse, dying, or no vegetation as these are obvious signs that **PROPEX** Pyramat is losing intimate contact with the slope surface. If loss of ground surface occurs, **PROPEX** Pyramat will need to be removed and reinstalled as described in patching and repairs section after the eroded area is backfilled with compacted soil that is similar to material of the slope. After reinstallation, re-establish vegetation on the newly installed **PROPEX** Pyramat and disturbed areas. Monitor the sites to determine if frequent watering may be required to establish vegetation.

To minimize exposure to unwanted maintenance and repair, **PROPEX** Pyramat armored slopes should be free of unauthorized vehicular traffic. Routine maintenance and slope inspections should be performed with rubber tired vehicles. Tracked equipment such as skid steers, excavators, or dozers should only be allowed to traffic over the material in times of emergency after vegetation establishment is complete. Failure to control unauthorized traffic can result in **PROPEX** Pyramat being damaged resulting in erosion below the material during storm events. In addition, routine mowing maintenance should be used to keep the protected area free of unwanted brush, saplings, and trees. Selective herbicides that target only the unwanted plants can be used as long as the vegetation established with **PROPEX** Pyramat is not impaired. Failure to control the sapling and tree growth can result in the trees being uprooted during a flood.

### 2. Maintaining vegetation

Good vegetative cover will ensure maximum performance of **PROPEX** Pyramat. Vegetative cover care starts before a project is complete and is ongoing until all the material is installed. Vegetative cover should be given every opportunity to grow and establish well. This will require that a contractor periodically fertilize, water, and mow the grasses as needed until a project is complete in the short-term, with the owner of the slope fulfilling the maintenance of the slope in a similar fashion for the long-term. For the entire lifecycle of **PROPEX** Pyramat, every effort must be made to prevent unauthorized encroachments, grazing, vehicle traffic, the misuse of chemicals, or burning during inappropriate seasons.



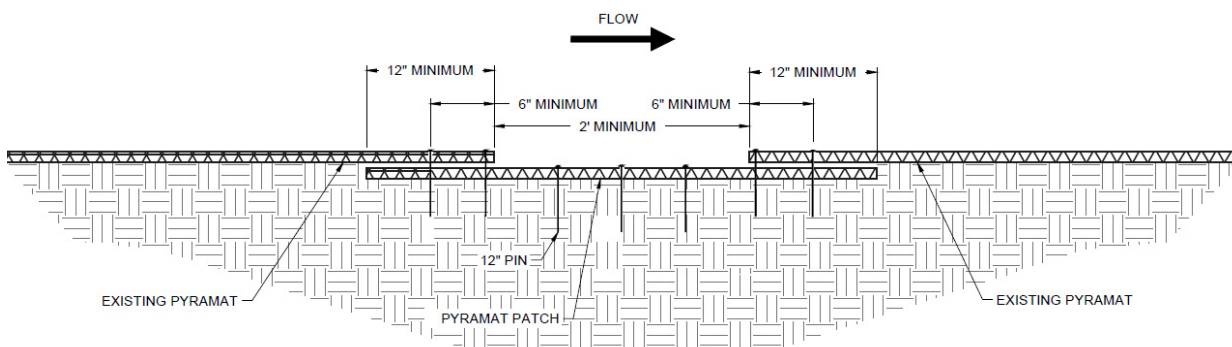
1. After the installation of vegetation is complete, immediately water and soak the entire area using a fine spray to prevent erosion and loss of seeds. A suggested amount of water is identified below. Prior to installation if using sod, the sod pads in storage should be kept moist at all times and not stored for more than 24 hours from site arrival to installation. Warmer weather will necessitate more frequent applications than listed below.
  - A. For each reach/segment of installed vegetation, watering shall be conducted immediately after each installation or the day's work.
  - B. For initial vegetation establishment, water vegetation in a manner consistent with best practices for vegetation type and location.
  - C. Establish a watering schedule and follow until vegetation is well established and will thrive in the absence of manual watering.
  - D. Avoid excessive application of water, so that surface runoff does not occur. Runoff should be prohibited. However, additional watering may be required for repaired or damaged areas.
2. Fertilizer should be applied as needed to address any nutrient deficiencies revealed in soil testing.
3. Implement best practices for mowing over **PROPEX** Pyramat. While **PROPEX** Pyramat is designed to withstand non-hydraulic stresses such as mowing, there are procedures to minimize exposure to unwanted damage.
  - A. Immediately after installation, signage and post shall be installed stating that "Vehicles and pedestrians are prohibited from access" on the slopes and the newly installed vegetation. Signage shall be posted every 1,500 lineal ft.
  - B. Vegetated areas should be mowed to a height no less than 6 in (152 mm) and no greater than 12 in (305 mm) from natural ground after a period of 60 days of growth. The excessive grass clippings created from mowing shall be evenly spread on the slope section outside of the armored area. Periodic and final grass mowing should be performed until final inspection and acceptance of slope work. Monitor the vegetated areas throughout winter months and generate reports as needed, noting any issues that should be addressed. Minimum mowing heights will depend on the vegetation density and should be as follows:
    - i. 6 in (152 mm) with 0-30% vegetation establishment
    - ii. 4 in (102 mm) with 30-70% vegetation establishment
    - iii. 3 in (76 mm) with 7-100% vegetation establishment
  - C. To prevent damage to the newly established vegetation, the mowing tractor should be fitted with 3-rib agriculture tires. Note that tractors with 8 ft (2.4 m) flail mowers provide best results. Tractors with 15 ft (4.6 m) brush hogs should avoid sharp turns up the slope to prevent damage to vegetation.
  - D. Mowing should not take place for a minimum of 48 hours after a rainfall event of 2 in (51 mm) or more to minimize the potential for rutting and/or damage to the slope surface. Maintenance mowing of the slope should be done on a consistent basis to prevent vegetation growing to more than 3 ft (0.9 m) in height. This will minimize thatch thickness and potential damage to **PROPEX** Pyramat. If turn-around pads are present, operate mowing equipment utilizing the turn-around pads to the fullest extent. The mowing blade height over **PROPEX** Pyramat should be a minimum of 8 in (203 mm). However, should vegetation grow to more than 3 ft (0.9 m) in height, the mowing blade height for the condition should be a minimum of 12 in (305 mm).
4. Some special circumstances may exist. When mowing the crown of a slope with a crown or crest equal to or exceeding 20%, it should be mowed with an articulating arm mower to minimize the potential for the mower blades to catch **PROPEX** Pyramat at the slope surface. The articulating arm mower should be level on the surface with the articulating arm extending over the crown. Pay close attention to areas where the slope changes. The mower blades should be set at a minimum height of 8 in (203 mm). If **PROPEX** Pyramat is damaged by the mowing blades at any time, mowing should stop immediately and further direction should be obtained to continue activity. Repair the damaged area as described in the patching and repairs section.

5. **PROPEX** Pyramat protected slopes are not as susceptible to animal burrowing due to the tenacity of the material; however, inspections to detect the presence of burrowing animal activity are generally most effective immediately after the slope has been mowed. Animal burrows that are identified should be thoroughly excavated and inspected, backfilled with compacted soil that is similar to material of the slope, and vegetation re-established. This will avoid the possibility of water piping through unfilled portions of the burrows. Should **PROPEX** Pyramat be damaged, it is to be repaired as described patching and repairs section.

### 3. Patching and repairs

**PROPEX** Pyramat may require localized repair at times. For emergency repairs, an adequate supply of **PROPEX** Pyramat should be maintained in inventory with the necessary tools to install. This will allow for a timely, initial repair of the system.

1. In order to identify areas in need of repair, the site should be patrolled immediately after mowing and after rain events of 2 in (51 mm) or more. When patrolling look for areas of sparse vegetation, exposed edges of material, and areas where direct contact between **PROPEX** Pyramat and the slope surface is compromised. **PROPEX** Pyramat should be rated as acceptable, minimally acceptable, or unacceptable during inspection.
  - A. Acceptable (A) - The rated area is in satisfactory, acceptable condition, and will function as designed and intended during the rain event. **PROPEX** Pyramat has no exposed edges, is installed tightly by maintaining direct contact to the slope surface with no drilling beneath, and has over 90% vegetation cover. There is no noticeable damage present.
  - B. Minimally Acceptable (M) - The rated area has a minor deficiency that needs to be corrected. The minor deficiency will not seriously impair the functioning of the area during the next rain event; however, the overall reliability of the project will be lowered because of the minor deficiency. **PROPEX** Pyramat has 75% vegetation cover with unvegetated patches as large as one square yard. Edges of the material are exposed with noticeable damage. Minimal erosion has occurred underneath **PROPEX** Pyramat.
  - C. Unacceptable (U) - The rated area is unsatisfactory. The deficiency is so serious that the area will not adequately function in the next rain event. **PROPEX** Pyramat has been physically torn, ripped, or lifted from the slope surface. Less than 75% vegetation cover is present with unvegetated patches being greater than 1 square yard, and there is evidence that erosion is occurring beneath **PROPEX** Pyramat.
2. Repair any raised or exposed edges of **PROPEX** Pyramat by driving existing and additional pins along the edges as necessary to securely fasten to the ground. Inspect areas where the vegetation is not growing on top of the material. Many times this is an indicator that the material has lost contact with the ground beneath. Check for voids beneath **PROPEX** Pyramat and fill any holes, gullies, etc. with compacted fill material if possible. Replace **PROPEX** Pyramat as described below.
3. To repair **PROPEX** Pyramat, cut out and remove damaged areas in a square configuration a minimum size of 2 ft by 2 ft (0.6 m x 0.6 m). Remove all vegetation and debris atop of the material. Loosen the top 1-2 in (25-51 mm) of soil in the patch area then seed. The subgrade of area to be patched shall be prepared to be smooth and uniform and transition smoothly into the in-situ area. Cut a square **PROPEX** Pyramat patch a minimum of 12 in (305 mm) greater than the damaged area for all four sides of the patch. Overlap the patch area in all directions a minimum of 12 in (305 mm). The patch overlaps shall be tucked under the existing damaged **PROPEX** Pyramat material (Figure 14 and Figure 15).



**Figure 14: PROPEX Pyramat patch cross section**

4. Install pins on 6 in (150 mm) (max) centers. For larger areas of damage, pins should be installed to match existing pin pattern. Once **PROPEX** Pyramat is in place, vegetate per project specifications.

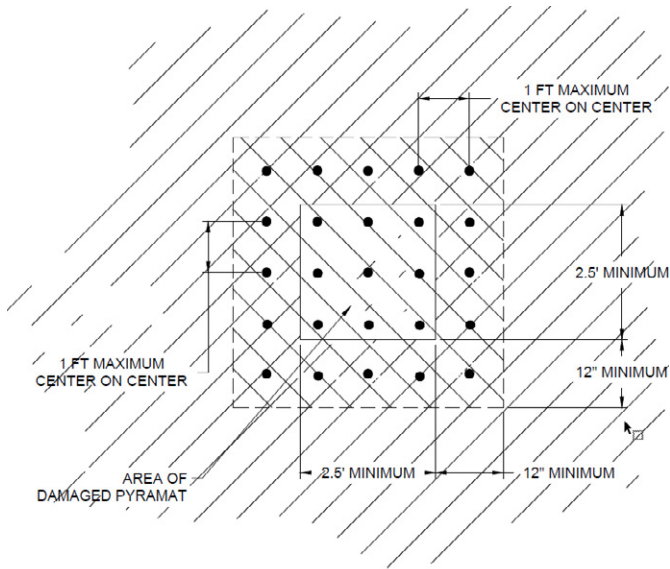


Figure 15: PROPEX Pyramat patch plan view

#### 4. Summary

Maintenance should consist of watering and weeding, repair of all erosion, and any re-seeding as necessary to establish a uniform stand of vegetation during construction and beyond. A minimum of 70% of the armored area should be covered with no bare or dead spots greater than 10 ft<sup>2</sup> (1 m<sup>2</sup>). Establishing vegetation should not be mowed prior to 70% vegetative density and a minimum grass growth of 4 in (100 mm). Throughout the duration of the project, the contractor should be responsible for mowing to facilitate growth and should not let the vegetation in the armored areas exceed 18 in (450 mm). In addition, the contractor should water all grassed areas as often as necessary to establish satisfactory growth and to maintain its growth throughout the duration of the project. After the project is complete, it is the responsibility of the owner to maintain and upkeep all **PROPEX** Pyramat installed areas for long term performance and best results as described herein for superior slope armoring.

### **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.

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