

Activity 130 Mowing

Description

Activity 130 involves machine mowing roadside vegetation, generally other than large brush or trees, to:

- Maintain sight distance.
- Provide the clear zone and allow an open area to help drivers see animals that may enter the roadway.
- Control weeds and other undesirable vegetation.
- Control unwanted drifting of snow caused by vegetation.
- Provide resistance to fire resulting from use of the roadway.

General Instructions

Perform this activity as described in the Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) Plan for the District and within the guidelines listed below. Perform mowing before grasses and other vegetation reach maturity to reduce fire danger and to reduce the spreading of seed of unwanted species.

Refer to Activity 125 for mowing in Water Quality Facilities.

Refer to Activity 132 for mowing brush.

Refer to Activity 136 for mowing in established landscape areas.

Refer to Activity 137 for mowing in designated rest areas.

Refer to Activity F03 for mowing at building or property sites.

Generally, perform mowing within the following guidelines:

- Mow the clear zone, including the clear zone in the median area of separated roadways, if needed to accomplish the objectives in the activity description above.
- Only spot mow undesirable vegetation, beyond the clear zone, that is not controlled by other means.
- Mow as needed to ensure adequate sight distance and visibility.
- May mow the entire area of urban interchanges. Mow at rural interchanges only to ensure adequate sight distance and visibility.
- Mow generally to a minimum height of 6 inches (150 mm).
- Generally, do not attempt to mow slopes when the mowing activity may damage the vegetation or the ground surface.
- If adjacent developed (houses and landscaped yards) properties:
 - Are separated from ODOT property by a wall or “solid” fence (including a chain link fence with slats), mow only the clear zone and needed spot mowing, if needed to accomplish the objectives in the activity description.

- Are separated from ODOT property only by a barbed wire fence, woven wire fence, chain link fence without slats, or by no fence, mow to the edge of the ODOT property.
- Mow and otherwise control vegetation in riparian areas, wetlands, and applicable areas on *Resource Area Maps* as described in the management plan for each area.
- Identify and mark other areas not to be mowed or where mowing may be inhibited, including:
 - Rocky areas.
 - Areas where surface water is present or other soft areas where equipment may damage the ground or vegetation.
 - Structures.
 - Markers.
 - Utility facilities.

Take appropriate action to prevent harm to threatened and endangered species. Refer to the *Resource Area Maps* and comply with all restrictions for work in those areas. Seek assistance from the District Manager and the Region Environmental Coordinator as needed.

If noxious weeds exist in areas that are not covered by the IVM Plan, work with the District Manager to implement appropriate methods to control the noxious weeds. Seek further guidance and assistance from the Vegetation Management Coordinator in the Office of Maintenance as needed.

As part of the IVM Plan, reduce the areas to be mowed by:

- Controlling weeds and other undesirable vegetation by other methods that do not require mowing.
- Preserving existing desirable native groundcover.
- Establishing low maintenance roadsides through use of native grasses and forbs.
- Not mowing areas unless grass or other vegetation causes specific problems. This includes areas at the top of cutbanks, beyond the clear zone, etc.

Set mowers at 150 mm (6 inches) or more in height to prevent scalping of the soil or unwanted damage to vegetation and to reduce throwing rocks and other debris. Use the appropriate type of mower for the area to be mowed.

Before mowing, inspect the area to be mowed to identify and mark hidden obstacles, hazards, and items to be protected or removed and replaced.

If a mower operator will be working alone or in an isolated area, establish an appropriate method to periodically assure the safety of the operator. Refer to discussion in the Safety section of this Guide.

If a citizen objects to this work, take appropriate action including:

- Identify the citizen's concerns and courteously explain the objectives of the work and other considerations.

- If the citizen's concerns are not satisfied, review the work to see if the concerns are valid.
- If appropriate, modify the work to accommodate the valid concerns.
- If the work is proper, continue work. If the citizen wishes to file a damage claim, refer to the Crashes, Injuries, and Damage to Property section of this Guide.
- Do not perform or continue any work if it may cause injury to the citizen or unacceptable damage to the citizen's property.
- Refer to discussion in Activity 131 if a citizen interferes with or obstructs a mowing operation.

Controlling Erosion, Sedimentation, and Pollutants or Contaminants

Plan and implement methods to control erosion, sedimentation, and pollutants or contaminants, including those discussed in the Control of Erosion, Sedimentation, and Pollutants or Contaminants section of this Guide and the ODOT *Routine Road Maintenance Water Quality and Habitat Guide Best Management Practices*.

As appropriate, implement and maintain devices and processes including those described in the *Field Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control*.

Temporary Protection and Direction of Traffic

Plan, implement, and maintain traffic control as addressed in the *Traffic Control on State Highways for Short Term Work Zones* handbook.

Equipment

Select equipment as needed for the work and situation.

Materials

May include traffic control devices for specific situations.

Work Method

1. Inspect area to be mowed to identify and protect or remove hidden and visible objects, including culverts, markers, rocks, wet areas, etc.
2. Identify steep slopes, affected areas on *Resource Area Maps*, wetlands, waterways, water quality facilities, and other protected areas where mowing will not be done, where mowing is not needed, or where mowing must be done in a special manner.
3. Implement appropriate traffic control.
4. Mow appropriate areas.
5. Perform needed cleanup. Replace removed objects and repair damaged objects.
6. If work has disturbed slopes, wetlands, etc., implement appropriate methods to control erosion and sedimentation. Mark the locations to avoid damage from future operations.
7. Remove traffic control.

Measurement of Accomplishment, Expenditure Account, and Charge Activity

Measurement is number of acres (hectares) mowed. Expenditure account type is Highway EA. Designate a subjob of 800 if the work involves bicycle path facilities.

- Charge all work to TEAMS Activity 130.