

Activity 132 Brush Mowing

Description

Activity 132 involves machine mowing of roadside brush and small trees to:

- Provide or maintain the clear zone.
- Provide or maintain acceptable sight distance or visibility.
- Remove undesirable vegetation.
- Reduce drifting of snow.
- Allow open areas to help drivers see animals that may enter the roadway.
- Minimize or control growth of trees outside the clear zone.
- Promote growth of desirable trees and shrubs.

General Instructions

Refer to Activity 131 for control of noxious weeds and for applying pesticides to control unwanted future growth.

Perform Activity 133 to remove trees and brush when the trees or brush:

- Are too large to be properly removed with the brush mower.
- Are inaccessible to the brush mower due to terrain, ground conditions, riparian areas, wetlands, etc.

Perform brush mowing to control vegetation:

- To the guidelines described below.
- At the level allowed by the performance budget.
- As described in the *Desired Conditions of Maintenance Features on State Highways*.

Perform brush mowing as described in the Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) Plan for the District. The IVM Plan should identify areas where additional vegetation is to be removed to enhance the clear zone, improve sight distance, etc. It should also identify noxious weeds to be controlled by other activities.

Brush mowing work may involve areas that contain 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.

Generally, perform brush mowing within the following guidelines to accomplish the objectives in the activity description:

- Maintain the clear zone.
- Provide about 30 feet (10 meters) from the edge of pavement for drivers to see wildlife.
- Control or remove vegetation that impairs sight distance of drivers, such as:
 - Obscures traffic signals or signs.
 - Obstructs the driver's view at intersections or interchanges.

- Obstructs the driver's view across the inside of curves.
- Spot remove only undesirable vegetation outside the above limits. Perform Activity 133 to remove large brush and trees.
- Perform brush mowing while vegetation is still fairly young to make the work easier and to reduce the opportunity for the remaining stump to re-grow.
- Remove brush to a minimum height of 6 inches (150 mm) to avoid scalping or otherwise unacceptably disturbing the ground or underlying desirable vegetation.
- Perform this work in a manner that preserves desirable low growing or other vegetation.
- Maintain vegetation in median areas to provide separation between traffic directions.
- Perform this activity in wetlands, riparian areas, and areas in *Resource Area Maps* according to the management plan for the area.
- Take appropriate action to prevent harm to threatened and endangered species. Refer to the ODOT Special Management Area Program administered by Environment Section.
- Generally do not use this activity to:
 - Remove restrictions to drainage since the remaining stumps will still create a problem.
 - Limb or prune trees.
- In general, do not remove vegetation if it does not interfere with the operation or maintenance of the highway.
- Perform Activity 133 to remove undesirable brush and trees in steep, rocky, uneven, and wet areas.
- Allow third parties to remove vegetation to provide visibility of billboards where it does not conflict with other scenic or local objectives.

As appropriate and as specified by the IVM Plan, treat remaining stumps with an appropriate pesticide to retard unwanted future growth.

If the brush mowing leaves significant debris, take care to assure that the debris does not clog drainage or become a fire hazard.

If the obstructing vegetation is off of ODOT property, obtain written permission of the property owner before entering the private property to control the vegetation.

The operator of the brush mower must, among other things:

- Be aware that the brush mower is an oversize piece of equipment. Exercise due caution when operating it, including moving it between work areas.
- Inspect the area, before starting brush mowing, to:
 - Determine the limits of brush mowing, including trees to be protected or removed by hand.
 - Identify steep slopes and wet, rocky, or other dangerous areas where brush mowing should not be done.
 - Identify hidden hazards or items to be protected.

- Identify any utility facilities that may be in the work area and work with the Transportation Maintenance Manager if the facility owner needs to protect the facility or remove unwanted vegetation near the facility. Refer to discussion in the Public Relations section of this Guide to request utilities to locate and mark their facilities.
- Not use the brush mower to trim trees. If limbs are accidentally damaged by the operations, use hand methods to properly remove the damaged limbs.
- Not operate the brush mower in an unsafe manner or a manner not recommended by the manufacturer.

If a brush mower operator will be working alone or in an isolated area, establish an appropriate method to periodically assure the safety of the operator. Also 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 brush 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

Tractor or other equipment with brush mower attachment

Materials

Generally, no materials are needed

Work Method

1. Inspect the area to be brush mowed to identify and protect or remove hidden and visible objects, including culverts, markers, rocks, utility facilities, etc.
2. Identify steep slopes, rocky areas, wet areas, etc. where brush mowing will not be done or where brush mowing is not needed.
3. Identify areas on *Resource Area Maps*, wetlands, waterways, and other protected areas and perform brush mowing as identified in the management plan for the area.
4. Identify trees that are not to be damaged or that must be removed by hand.
5. Implement appropriate traffic control.
6. Perform brush mowing.
7. Clean up areas that may be visually unacceptable because of the brush mowing and related debris, including removing damaged limbs or trees by hand methods.
8. If the work has unacceptably disturbed slopes, wet areas, etc., implement appropriate methods to control erosion.
9. Remove traffic control.
10. As appropriate, arrange for spraying of stumps to retard unwanted future growth.

Measurement of Accomplishment, Expenditure Account, and Charge Activity

Measurement is number of pass miles (kilometers) 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 132.