

## Activity 133 Brush Cutting (Hand)

### Description

Activity 133 involves hand cutting and removing roadside brush and trees to:

- Provide or maintain acceptable sight distance or visibility.
- Provide or maintain the clear zone.
- Reduce shading in areas that tend to ice over.
- Reduce drifting of snow.
- Eliminate hazard trees.
- Remove undesirable vegetation.
- Reduce restrictions to drainage other than work near bridges or major structures.
- Allow open areas to help drivers see animals that may enter the roadway.
- Minimize or control growth of trees outside the clear zone.
- Limb or prune trees.
- Promote growth of desirable trees and shrubs.
- Remove brush or trees, as appropriate, in areas that the brush mower cannot or should not operate or that the vegetation is too large to control with the brush mower.

It includes the picking up, chipping, hauling, and other handling of woody debris, including needed disposal.

### General Instructions

Refer to Activity 125 for work in Water Quality Facilities.

Refer to Activity 131 for applying pesticides to control unwanted future growth.

Refer to Activity 136 for brush cutting (hand) in landscape areas.

Refer to Activity 137 for brush cutting (hand) in designated rest areas.

Refer to Activity 160 for removing vegetation near a bridge or major structure.

Perform Activity 180 when removing trees, or parts thereof, that fall or are caused to fall onto roadways by natural events including slides, wind, snow, ice, or rain.

Perform this activity 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*.

Work under this activity 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.

Perform brush cutting (hand) within the following guidelines to accomplish the objectives in the activity description:

- Remove unacceptable brush and trees by hand cutting when the brush or trees are too large to remove with the brush mower, when the brush mower cannot reach the unacceptable vegetation, and when it is the most cost-effective method, other than work near a major bridge or structure.
- Maintain the clear zone.
- Provide about 30 feet (10 meters) from the edge of pavement for drivers to see wildlife.
- Control or remove brush or trees that impair 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.
- If vegetation causes snow drifting or ice areas on the roadway, selectively remove and control vegetation to minimize the drifting or ice problems.
- Maintain vegetation in median areas to provide separation between traffic directions.
- Limb or prune trees as needed for good horticultural practices.
- Remove or appropriately prune vegetation damaged by the brush mower, other activities, crashes, incidents, etc.
- In general, do not remove vegetation that does not interfere with the operation or maintenance of the highway.
- Perform this activity in wetlands, riparian areas, water quality facilities, and Special Management areas 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.
- Allow third parties to remove vegetation to provide visibility of billboards where it does not conflict with other scenic or local objectives.

Remove the brush and trees as close to the ground as possible without scalping or otherwise unacceptably disturbing the ground. Refer to the ODOT *Safety and Health Manual* for requirements for chain saw operations.

Control brush and trees less than 6" DBH (diameter at breast height) as described in the Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) Plan for the District. The IVM Plan should identify areas where vegetation is to be removed to resolve problems, including those in the activity definition above. It should also identify noxious weeds to be controlled under other activities.

Consult the ODOT Forester in the Office of Maintenance for advice on dealing with trees over 6" DBH including determining trees to be controlled, proper methods to control the trees, and falling trees. The ODOT Forester will coordinate the removal of trees that may have merchantable value.

As appropriate or as shown in the IVM Plan, treat remaining stumps with an appropriate pesticide to retard unwanted future growth.

Remove cut material as the work proceeds. Either haul it to an appropriate dumpsite or use a chipper to dispose of cuttings. Chips may often be left at the site by spreading in loose layers not more than 3" deep, but take care to assure that they do not clog drainage or become a fire hazard.

Trees on or near the highway that are found to be weakened, unsound, undermined, leaning, or exposed so they may fall across the highway are called hazard trees. Hazard trees can include trees on or off the right of way that may cause frost spots, trees on cut or embankment slopes that sway and open the ground to water that causes slides, and trees close to the pavement.

Hazard trees should be removed as promptly as possible after they are discovered. Seek assistance from the ODOT Forester in identifying and removing hazard trees.

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

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 cutting (hand) operation.

Trees likely to fail within 1 or 2 days of detection based on best judgement and trees that have fallen on or dangerously near to the roadway are considered imminent hazard trees and should be cleared from the right of way in an expedient manner. Logs from these trees should be decked near their point of origin and the owner, if not ODOT, contacted to arrange for their disposal. When the logs are the property of ODOT, contact the ODOT Forester in the Office of Maintenance for advice on their disposal. When possible, trees should be treated in a manner as to maximize the merchantability of the timber.

#### 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

Equipment may include:

- Chain saw(s) or other devices to cut or prune brush or trees.
- Chipper or trucks to haul removed vegetation.

#### Materials

May include traffic control devices.

#### Work Method

1. Identify trees or brush to be cut or otherwise removed or pruned. Use appropriate practices on steep slopes or in areas on *Resource Area Maps*, wetlands, riparian areas, water quality facilities, etc.
2. Identify utility facilities or other items that may interfere with or be damaged by the work. If appropriate, modify work methods or seek assistance from the involved utility.
3. Implement appropriate traffic control.
4. Cut or otherwise remove or prune brush or trees.
5. Chip vegetation or load and haul away to an appropriate disposal site.
6. Remove traffic control.
7. As appropriate, arrange for spraying of stumps to retard unwanted future growth.

#### Measurement of Accomplishment, Expenditure Account, and Charge Activity

Measurement is number of worker hours involved. Expenditure account type is Highway EA. Designate a subjob of 800 if the work involves bicycle path facilities.

- Charge all work to TEAMS Activity 133.