Permits & Operations

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DEPUTY STATE MAINTENANCE ENGINEER
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Tree Trimming & Removal Policies
Tree Trimming and Removal Policies

• 7/27/2006 Memorandum
• Will allow removal for:
  • Clear zone safety
  • Utility location or relocation
  • Diseased trees and invasive plants
  • Larger grading and landscaping
  • Healthy growth
• Commercialized Interstate Interchanges may be considered

The following is a list of areas and/or reasons the Department will allow tree removal along ALDOT ROW:

• Trees removed from the Clear of Safety Zone by Permit. For the purposes of this guideline Figure 2-1: Minimum Clear Zone Distances and Table 2-1: Horizontal Curve Adjustments for Clear Zone from the AASHTO Roadside Design Guide, latest edition shall be used (copy attached).

• Limited tree removal for Permitted utility location or relocation. Care should be taken to ensure only minimal tree removal is allowed.

• Trees that are diseased or are considered by the Department to be a safety hazard, nuisance, or invasive plant species.

• Trees removed as a result of grading operations performed under a Grading and Landscaping Permit. All permit request of this type should include considerations for tree re-establishment along the ROW outside of the Clear Zone.

• Limited tree removal to promote growth of existing healthy trees. Undergrowth and trees less than four inches in diameter (at breast height) may be considered for removal with the proper Permit.

• Tree removal within the limits of a commercialized Interstate Interchange may be considered.
Tree Trimming and Removal Policies

7/27/2006 Memorandum

Will not allow removal for:
- Complete commercial visibility
- Trees planted using federal funds
- Trees providing buffer zone
- Visibility of advertising structures (Limited trimming at permitted signs)

The following is a list of areas and/or reasons the Department should not allow tree removal along ALDOT ROW:

- Complete tree removal solely to provide visibility to a commercial or industrial area. Consideration may be given to providing reasonable sight distance triangles. Along the Interstate System, tree removal shall be limited to within the limits of a commercialized interchange.

- Landscaped areas where trees were planted using federal funds.

- Trees that provide a buffer zone between the roadway and adjacent property. However, these are areas where the removal of undergrowth and trees less than four inches in diameter (at breast height) may help the aesthetics of the highway. Recommendations for the extensive thinning of trees should be coordinated through a registered arborist.

- Trees blocking visibility of advertising structures. For permitted signs only, limited trimming is provided through the Highway Beautification Act, Promulgated Rule and Regulation #10.
Tree Trimming and Removal Policies

- **11/27/2013 Clarification**

- Applies to Outdoor Advertising Structures
  - Trimming limits
  - Removal of non-native and invasive species
  - Removal of native species when beneficial
  - Access to ROW

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Clarification of Vegetation Trimming Policy at Outdoor Advertising Structures

A reduction in the number of trimming permits submitted repetitively by outdoor advertising companies in a benefit to ALDOT maintenance operations. Therefore, when reviewing and processing applications to trim vegetation at a sign, incorporate the guidance provided below.

**Documentation of Trimming Limits**

On a permit application, note the trimming limits on the sign photograph five (5) feet from each side of the sign face and five (5) feet below the sign face.

**Removal of non-native and invasive species from the ROW**

When requested by the applicant, and when it would not otherwise create a problem on the ROW, removal of non-native and invasive species within 500 feet of a sign but outside the 8-foot distance triangle should be allowed through the execution of an MB-05 Grading and Landscaping Permit. The MB-05 application must comply with all the normal requirements such as erosion control, treatment of bare ground, performance bonds, general ALDOT standards, etc. To obtain an official list of invasive species, visit the Alabama Invasive Plant Council website at www.re-esp.org/alabama and select the 2012 Updated Plant List link under the General Information heading.

**Removal of non-native and invasive species from ROW fence lines**

In areas where it would not otherwise create a problem, applicants may request to clear fence lines within 500 feet of a sign, but outside the 8-foot triangle, that are overgrown with non-native species or non-desirable native species. If the clearing is accomplished by removal of the existing fence and vegetation then the applicant shall install a new fence that satisfies ALDOT requirements. That request shall require the submission of an MB-05 Grading and Landscaping Permit. The MB-05 application must address the re-establishment of any disturbed ROW markers or other surveying monuments and must also comply with all the normal requirements such as erosion control, treatment of bare ground, performance bonds, fence replacement, general ALDOT standards, etc.

**Removal of native species from ROW**

In cases where removal of desirable native, non-invasive species within 500 feet of a sign is deemed to be beneficial to ALDOT, consideration should be given to approval of an MB-05 Grading and Landscaping Permit. The MB-05 application must comply with all the normal requirements such as erosion control, treatment of bare ground, performance bonds, general ALDOT standards, etc.

**Access to ROW**

In cases where the vegetation to be trimmed is on the ROW of a certified access route, the applicant shall not access the ROW from the travel way. Instead, the applicant may create a temporary opening in the cleared access fence through which equipment may pass. The applicant is responsible for closing the temporary opening with temporary fencing whenever work is not being performed and for restoring the permanent fence when trimming operations are complete.

George H. Comer, PE
State Maintenance Engineer

Date: 11/27/2013
Tree Trimming and Removal Policies

- 2/13/2018 Memorandum
- Department reserves the right to seek reimbursement
- Establishes a minimum of some portion of market value

An applicant’s request for tree removal as part of a permit submission—specifically involving the proposed grading and landscaping of the right-of-way, removal due to utility installation or relocation, or landscaping on the right-of-way in the vicinity of an Outdoor Advertising structure—may be granted at the Department’s discretion. Should the Department determine the removal reasonable or beneficial to the State and to the maintenance of the Highway, the Department reserves the right to seek reimbursement from the applicant for some portion of the market value of the trees to be removed as noted below. The Department, at the discretion of the ultimate approving authority for a specific permit, can waive any reimbursement requirement for permit requests involving the installation or relocation of public utilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PINE TREES</th>
<th>OTHER TREES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tree Diameter</td>
<td>Cost/Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4” ≤ 11”</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11” ≤ 20”</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 20”</td>
<td>$70</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Main Goal: Avoid random, unregulated clearing of vegetation on State ROW
I-65 Northbound at Fieldstown Road (Exit 271)
I-65 Northbound at Fieldstown Road (Exit 271)
I-65 Northbound at Fieldstown Road (Exit 271)
I-65 Northbound at Fieldstown Road (Exit 271)
I-20 Eastbound at Pell City/Ashville (Exit 158)
I-20 Eastbound at Pell City/Ashville (Exit 158)
I-20 Eastbound at Pell City/Ashville (Exit 158)
Other State Practices

How does your state look at tree removal at commercialized interstate interchanges for visibility of a business/development?
Camping World at M.M. 233 along I-65 Southbound
Camping World at M.M. 233 along I-65 Southbound
Other State Practices

How does your state look at tree removal along the interstate in front of a business for the purpose of visibility?
I-65 Southbound Near M.M. 245
I-65 Southbound Near M.M. 245
Other State Practices

How does your state look at tree removal/trimming at permitted Outdoor Advertising Sign Structures?
Other State Practices

Does your state look at tree removal differently depending on the road classification?
CALL ME ALABAMA!

PERMITS & OPERATIONS

334.242.6843

NO REPRESENTATION IS MADE THAT THE QUALITY OF THE PERMIT SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED IS GREATER THAN THE QUALITY OF PERMIT SERVICES PERFORMED BY OTHER BUREAUS.