



Road
Commission
of Kalamazoo
County

POLICY

ROADSIDE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

TREE PRUNING AND REMOVAL

The Board of County Road Commissioners of the County of Kalamazoo has the duty to maintain a county road system that is reasonably safe and convenient for public travel.

The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) will address trees (as defined below) that are found to be within the portion of the highway right-of-way that is designed for vehicular travel (i.e. a tree that falls within the traveled portion of the road) upon reasonable notice. The RCKC may remove trees from the public right-of-way that is not designed for vehicular travel, but has the discretion not to do so. The RCKC is entitled to remove trees from any portion of the public right-of-way for public use purposes including for road maintenance and construction activities, drainage improvements or creation of a clear zone.

Fallen trees within the traveled portion of the right-of-way will be moved outside of the road right-of-way to adjacent property when possible (except in those instances where the RCKC holds title to the entire road right-of-way). The relocated fallen trees will be left for the property owner's use and/or disposal. Within fifteen (15 days) of a fallen tree being relocated, the property owner may complete and submit a request that the fallen tree moved by the RCKC, county, municipal or township police, fire, emergency or public utility personnel be cut and stacked adjacent to the public right-of-way, or may request that it be removed.

If a property owner seeks to have a tree that is located in the public right of way, removed, trimmed or pruned, RCKC permission must be sought and granted through a permit application process before the owner engages in any such removal. The permit application fee may be waived at RCKC's discretion.

In situations arising from a road improvement project, the property owner may complete a tree removal notification form to request that any trees to be removed be cut and stacked adjacent to the public right-of-way, or may request that it be removed.

(tree(s) is defined as tree, tree stump, tree limbs, tree brush)

Adopted: 5/30/89
Amended: 2/20/96
Amended: 4/5/04
Revised: 12/17/13

BRUSH CONTROL AND REMOVAL

It is the policy of this Board to control and remove brush, in accordance with the Board's tree pruning and removal policy; to accomplish the work in an integrated approach using hand cutting, mechanical devices and herbicides; and to complete the work annually on approximately one-fourth of the RCKC's roadsides on a rotating basis (excluding plat streets). For the purposes of this policy, brush is defined as woody plant growth such as volunteer trees, low hanging limbs, shrubs and stump growth.

Brush control and removal by the RCKC, either by mechanical means or hand cutting, will be limited by the physical and cost constraints of available equipment, personnel, and funds for this purpose. Priority will be by road system, with the primary roads having the highest priority. Within road system classifications, the hazard exposure created by the brush will be used as the primary factor in establishing site or area priority. Maintaining clear vision at driveway access points will be the responsibility of the individual property owner.

Due to the extensive number of miles of road under the Board's jurisdiction and its budget limitations, brush control will be accomplished primarily by the application of herbicides. The herbicides used will be those approved by the appropriate state and federal agencies for this purpose. Only individuals properly licensed by the State of Michigan and supervised by RCKC personnel will apply herbicides. These individuals must strictly adhere to the RCKC's stringent bid document requirements and specifications. The application of herbicides will be accomplished using appropriate equipment, and they will be applied in a timely fashion with the intent of inhibiting or significantly retarding, woody plant growth and chemically pruning to provide horizontal and vertical clear zones. Herbicides will be handled and applied in accordance with the regulations and specifications listed on the product label, the applicable regulations of the State of Michigan, the Board's bid document, and this policy. Roadside areas that are aesthetically desirable due to the presence of wildflowers and non-toxic native plants may be exempted from the application of brush control herbicides at RCKC's discretion.

Property owners may remove brush and low hanging limbs at minimum fourteen (14) feet up and fourteen (14) feet away from the traveled portion of the right-of-way with RCKC permission prior to the time frame specified by RCKC. If the roadside vegetation control efforts have not been accomplished within the permitted time frame, an application of an herbicide may occur. Property owners are encouraged to maintain their property abutting the road right-of-way by removing roadside brush and low hanging limbs in the time frame specified by RCKC for this activity only with the required permit application process.

The RCKC encourages ongoing investigative efforts to evaluate alternative methods to maintaining roadside vegetation that enhance environmental conditions, and that are cost effective.

- Adopted: 6/7/77
- Amended: 9/6/77
- Amended: 12/20/77
- Amended: 11/25/86
- Amended: 2/20/96
- Amended: 4/5/04
- Revised: 12/17/13