



Highway Maintenance Manual
Chapter 07 Roadside Management
Section 15 Wildlife
Subject 15 Animal and Insect Pest Control

Bureau of Highway Maintenance
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1.0 Authority

[ATCP 21](#), Plant inspection and pest control, of the Wisconsin Administrative Code contains mandatory guidance on controlling and preventing the spread of pests that affect plants. Methods of preventing established populations of these pests from spreading include restrictions on importing certain products from infested areas and imposing quarantine on the area within the state containing the established population. This chapter describes existing import restrictions and quarantined areas for such pests as the emerald ash borer, the gypsy moth, and others.

2.0 Background

In recent years, Wisconsin citizens have voiced concerns and opinions about roadside features, e.g. ditches, wetlands, roadside prairies that may create habitat for undesirable wildlife and insect pests, e.g., mosquitoes and rats. Some citizens have called for draining or the removal of these features.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) promotes, manages and preserves certain areas of right of way as natural areas, such as wetlands and prairies. The department will not drain naturally occurring areas of standing water, e.g. created, restored or previously existing wetlands, or remove other roadside features, such as roadside prairies, for the purposes of animal and insect pest control.

Other roadside features, such as ditches and culverts, are integral components of highway drainage systems and function to drain water away from the roadway. These drainage features may periodically contain standing water due to system failure or because the topography is so flat infiltration is the only means of drainage. The department will not use extraordinary means to drain standing water for animal and insect pest control in these features, but if necessary due to system failure, corrective work will be performed in due course according to maintenance schedules.

The department will not treat natural areas or other roadside features with pesticides for the purpose of eradicating unwanted animal or insect pests in response to complaints from citizens. Citizen complaints should be referred to the local health department.

Animals and insect pests may cause or contribute to other problems in addition to faunal health concerns. Occasionally animals such as pocket gophers, muskrats or beavers can, either directly or indirectly, cause damage to the highway facility by digging holes or building dams that raise the water level. These animals may need to be controlled in order to protect the facility.

Outbreaks of insect pests may defoliate trees or shrubs (e.g. gypsy moth) or contribute to the spread of plant pathogens that may kill certain plant species (e.g. emerald ash borer). If these outbreaks are cyclical in nature and do not threaten the long-term health of native ecosystems, no pesticide treatments are necessary. If, however, the outbreaks threaten to destroy one or more major components of an ecosystem, the department should cooperate with responsible agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to prevent the spread or mitigate the damage.

3.0 Control for Health Reasons

Mosquito control commissions, local health departments, health care facilities, and other interested parties must fill out a DT1812, [application/permit to work on highway right of way](#) to apply pesticides on state right of way. See Highway Maintenance Manual (HMM) 07-05-15, Use of Herbicides, for more information about applying pesticides on state right of way. Submit the application to the regional office responsible for the county where

the proposed work will be located. A complete description of the proposed work along with detailed drawings, construction methods, types of materials, traffic control (if necessary) and the length of time needed to complete the work must accompany the permit application.

4.0 Control for Nuisance Animals

Nuisance animals are animals that cause damage to the highway facility by digging holes or erecting structures such as dams or by some other means.

When rodents dig large holes in the right of way that will cause damage to the facility, they may be controlled using rodenticides. Most rodenticides are harmful to other animals as well, so must be used with extreme care. The rodenticide may be classified as a restricted use pesticide in which case it must be applied by a pesticide applicator certified and licensed in the appropriate category(ies) in accordance with administrative code [ATCP 29](#), pesticide use and control. The use of rodenticides containing strychnine requires a permit from the Department of Natural Resources.

If animals or their structures cause structural damage to the highway, the animals should be trapped, see section 3.4, Trapping, of HMM 07-25-10, Harvesting Products of Nature, and removed and the structures destroyed. A private party may be hired to trap the animals or may be engaged to remove them for the value of their pelts. Consult the Department of Natural Resources trapping regulations when considering using this method of eliminating animal pests.

[NR 12.10\(1\)b](#), Wildlife damage and nuisance control, provides exemptions when landowners or their agents may remove nuisance animals without obtaining approval from the Department of Natural Resources. If the department engages a private party to do the work, that person must have the appropriate trapping license. The department must specifically authorize the person, in writing, to do the trapping and the letter of authorization must be in his/her possession when the work is being done.