



Highway Maintenance Manual
Chapter 07 Roadside Management
Section 10 Woody Vegetation
Subject 25 Logging by the Department

Bureau of Highway Maintenance
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1.0 Authority

[s. 66.1037 Wis. Stats.](#), Beautification and Protection, authorizes the public authority in control of the highway to “remove, cut, or trim or consent to the removing, cutting, or trimming of any tree, shrub, or vegetation in order to provide safety to users of the highway.”

[s. 84.07\(1\), Wis. Stats.](#), Maintenance of State Trunk Highways, authorizes “the care and protection of trees and other roadside vegetation...and all measures deemed necessary to provide adequate traffic service.”

2.0 General

The department does not typically permit logging requests. Bureau of Highway Maintenance (BHM) landscape architects should be consulted when considering any logging on excess parcels and right of way. In determining whether to conduct logging operations on department property, do not rely on recommendations from outside consultants or foresters because their management goals may differ from those of the department.

There are two types of logging requests; excess parcels and right of way. Requests for excess parcels will also need to be coordinated with Bureau of Technical Services (BTS), Real Estate. Real Estate will be able to determine if logging will be beneficial to the overall value of land. In most cases the cost benefit is not worth the department’s effort. However, there are occasions when it may be desirable to cut timber on state highway right of way.

Once the determination has been made to conduct a logging operation, consult with a forester to determine which trees should be cut, their approximate value, and how best to market them.

Profit from the sale of forest products from state highway rights of way may be marginal at best. Department labor costs for administering the contract or permit may exceed revenue gained. Therefore, there must be a clear public benefit to justify the cutting.

3.0 Considerations

The following are some of the considerations in managing timber on the right of way:

- **Safety** – Any tree cutting operation that would be unsafe to the traveling public should not be considered.
- **Public relations** – Cutting trees, particularly healthy trees, may be controversial so the reasons for the cutting must be clearly defined and defensible.
- **Salvage** – The salvage of trees dying or damaged by water, wind, etc. may improve the remaining trees and benefit the right of way. The salvage of trees damaged by insects or diseases may prevent further infestation of nearby healthy trees.
- **Thinning** – There are situations such as evergreen plantations in which trees are so densely spaced stagnation and deterioration occur. Thinning and removing the weak and dying trees may create a more healthy and attractive forest.
- **Reforestation** – Some species and stands of trees may be mature, and death and toppling may be imminent. Cutting practices can be designed which replace the mature trees with an attractive stand of young trees. This occurs after cutting when young trees are released and begin to grow. Others may sprout from seed as a result of the cutting.
- **Aesthetics** – Aesthetics of the highway is a high priority. The timber may enhance or be compatible with the timber behind the right of way or it may screen undesirable views. In the selection of trees to be cut, aesthetics will likely override profit.

- **Coordination** – There is a continuing program of timber sales on state and county forests. When such sales border on state highway right of way and it is deemed desirable to also log the adjacent right of way, it is recommended the sale of the timber on the right of way be coordinated with the sale on the adjacent property. This can be done by issuing a permit to the logging contractor. The sale price should normally be the same as that paid by the contractor to the adjacent landowner.

Quarantine – The presence of the emerald ash borer (EAB) in the state has prompted the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to issue a quarantine restricting the movement of EAB and infested host material such as trees, logs, firewood, mulch or nursery stock. As of 3/21/2018 statewide quarantine for EAB is in place. This means there are no restrictions on moving ash tree wood across county lines. A note of caution would be tribal lands may have their own restrictions and should be considered separately. Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection has a rule on the movement, [ATCP 21.17 Emerald ash borer; import controls and quarantine.](#)

4.0 Payment

Payment is commonly based either on a lump sum or by scaled volume.

The lump sum method is based on the total value obtained by cruising (measuring) and appraising the standing trees before harvest. The purchaser buys the total amount of wood harvested for a lump sum amount. Both parties rely on an accurate cruise.

The scale method consists of measuring (scaling) the wood after it is cut and stacked. The purchaser then pays for the actual amount of wood harvested at the contract unit price.

The lump sum method is recommended for small amounts of wood. There is less cost for the state by eliminating the additional labor required in scaling. There is less cost for the logger by possibly avoiding the cost of stacking and waiting for a scale and less risk to the state from theft of the wood while waiting for a scale.

When logging is permitted on the right of way checks should be made payable to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The region should send the check and a transmittal letter to the BHM landscape architects. Such payments will be deposited in the Integrated Vegetation Management – Statewide fund, Project ID 39500779997 for future landscaping use. Note this account name and ID number on the letter of transmittal.

When logging is permitted on an excess parcel, coordinate with the Financial Specialist, Bureau of Technical Services, Real Estate, 5th floor south tower HFSTB on how to proceed with payment.

5.0 Disposal of Slash and Cut Timber

Slash from cut timber in view of the traveling public should be chipped or lopped and scattered within 30 days as described in [s. 26.12\(7\), Wis. Stats.](#), slash disposal. For more information see HMM 07-10-10, Woody Vegetation Disposal, and Section 201 of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Standard Specifications for Highway and Structure Construction.

Take special care when handling oak, elm and ash species to prevent spreading oak wilt disease, Dutch elm disease and the emerald ash borer. Special handling of wood products may be necessary depending upon outbreaks of other insects or diseases affecting Wisconsin trees.

6.0 Unauthorized Removal of Timber

See HMM 07-10-30, Unauthorized Vegetation Damage or Destruction, for procedures to use when unauthorized removal of vegetation is encountered.