



Highway Maintenance Manual
Chapter 07 Roadside Management
Section 05 Herbaceous Vegetation
Subject 01 Exposed Ground

Bureau of Highway Maintenance
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1.0 Authority

[Chapter NR 216](#) Storm Water Discharge Permits. This is the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Administrative Code that manages storm water discharge permits to minimize the discharge of pollutants carried by storm water runoff.

[NR 706](#) Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification and Source Confirmation Requirements. This chapter establishes actions and procedures for those who discharge hazardous substances as well as the Department of Natural Resources and other state and local agencies responding to discharges of hazardous substances.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)/Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Cooperative Agreement, See [FDM 20-30-1.1](#)

2.0 General

When ground greater than one acre in size is exposed it becomes subject to NR 216 and the WDNR/WisDOT Cooperative Agreement. As well, areas of exposed ground could be affected by NR706 when the exposed ground comes in contact with hazardous substances.

Exposed ground provides an opportunity for erosion and for noxious and nuisance weeds and other invasive plant species to become established. See HMM 07-05-05, Control of Noxious, Invasive and Hazardous Plants. There are numerous activities that may result in exposed ground including the following:

- mowing too low (less than 6 inches in height) or on slopes that are too steep
- installing or repairing signs or guard rails
- removing access such as driveways
- vehicular crashes
- hazardous substance spills
- herbicide misapplication or drift
- natural disasters
- construction or maintenance projects that disturb the soil

3.0 Contaminated Exposed Ground

Exposed ground resulting from spills, herbicides or other contaminants may need to be examined, tested and reported. Test results may require removal of the contaminated soil.

4.0 Re-establishment

Exposed ground should be re-established quickly. Work should be accomplished within one week of exposure or prior to any heavy rain or high wind if such an event is anticipated within that week. To re-establish appropriate vegetation see the following list:

- excavate and replace contaminated soil with clean topsoil if needed
- finish the grade
- seed
- fertilize
- mulch
- place erosion mat if needed
- water exposed ground as soon as practicable in order to prevent erosion

Seed, fertilizer and agricultural limestone requirements may vary depending on soil type and available moisture. See the [Wisconsin Standard Specifications for Highway and Structure Construction](#) for applicable specifications.

- Section 624, Water
- Section 625, Topsoil and Salvaged Topsoil
- Section 627, Mulching
- Section 628, Erosion Control
- Section 629, Fertilizer and Agricultural Limestone
- Section 630, Seeding
- Section 631, Sodding
- Section 632, Furnishing and Planting Plant Materials

See also [Chapter 10](#) of the Facilities Development Manual (FDM) for further information on erosion control methods.

Refer to HMM 07-25-25, Grading, for procedures to be used to assure that private entities that are permitted to work on state trunk highway rights of way adhere to applicable federal and state regulations.