



Highway Maintenance Manual
Chapter 07 Roadside Management
Section 10 Woody Vegetation
Subject 35 Vegetation Damage Claims

Bureau of Highway Maintenance
May 2022

1.0 Authority

Refer to the Authority section of HMM 07-10-30, Unauthorized Damage and Destruction to Vegetation.

2.0 General

From time to time, roadside vegetation, primarily trees and shrubs, is cut down or trimmed by adjacent landowners, outdoor advertising sign owners or other members of the public without permission from the department. Typically, this is done to provide greater visibility to a sign or business from the roadway although occasionally it may occur for another reason such as to obtain firewood or be result of a traffic crash. This unauthorized cutting or trimming or accidental destruction is regarded by the department as damage to public property and, if the person(s) who did the damage can be identified and apprehended, reimbursement for the damage done will be pursued. (See HMM 07-10-30, Unauthorized Vegetation Damage or Destruction.)

3.0 Reporting

See Section 3.0 of HMM 07-10-30, Unauthorized Vegetation Damage or Destruction, for a detailed description of the procedure for handling unauthorized damage or destruction to roadside vegetation.

4.0 Reimbursement Payments

Reimbursement payments recovered from damage claims due to unauthorized damage or destruction to roadside vegetation should be made out to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and sent to the Bureau of Highway Maintenance (BHM) landscape architects. The landscape architects ensure the payments are deposited in the Integrated Vegetation Management – Statewide fund, Project ID 39500779997, for future landscaping use. This account name and project ID number should be noted on the letter of transmittal.

5.0 Future Project Eligibility Criteria

Eligible projects include maintenance landscape projects needed to: (a) mitigate damages to planted and natural roadside vegetation; (b) enhance roadside vegetation; (c) provide screening from or to objectionable views; (d) prevent headlight glare; (e) function as living snow fence; or (f) ecosystem restoration projects such as prairie, wetland, or woodland restoration not associated with improvement project permit requirements.

Specific ecosystem management operations may also be eligible. The work is not limited to the locale in which damages have occurred. Work is to adhere to provisions contained in the State of Wisconsin Standard Specifications for Highway and Structure Construction and [FDM Chapter 27](#). Contact BHM landscape architects for further information.

6.0 Project Set-up

Specific expenditure Project ID numbers should be requested for specific projects. See HMM 07-01-35, Private Donations, for more information.