

**19A NCAC 02E .0610    CONDITIONS OF SELECTIVE VEGETATION REMOVAL PERMITS  
FOR OUTDOOR ADVERTISING**

The following apply to the conditions of selective vegetation removal permits for outdoor advertising:

- (1) Selected vegetation, as defined in G.S. 136-133.1(b), may be cut, thinned, pruned, or removed in accordance with the standards set out in G.S. 136-133.4;
- (2) The permittee shall furnish a Performance Bond, certified check, or cashier's check made payable to North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for the sum of two thousand dollars (\$2,000). The Performance Bond, certified check, or cashier's check shall cover all restoration of the right-of-way to the condition prior to the occurrence of the damage caused by the permittee or the permittee's agent, if damage occurs during the permitted selective vegetation removal. The Performance Bond, certified check, or cashier's check shall be paid with the application before each permit to cut vegetation is issued. The Performance bond, certified check, or cashier's check shall run concurrently with the permit. The Performance Bond, certified check, or cashier's check shall be released after a final inspection of the work by the Department reveals that all work provided for and specified by the permit is found to be completed and, if damage is caused by the permittee or the permittee's agent, all damages to the right-of-way, including damage to fencing and other structures within the right-of-way, have been repaired or restored;
- (3) Companies that plan to apply for two or more permits may provide continuing bonds for the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) and that type of bond shall be kept on file by the Utilities Unit of the Department;
- (4) If the work is to be performed by any entity other than the sign owner or permittee, either the permittee or the other entity shall furnish the Performance Bond, certified check, or cashier's check, as described in this Rule, for all work provided for and specified by the permit. Required forms for all bonds are available upon request from the Department, or on the NCDOT Selective Vegetation Removal website: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/roadside/Pages/Selective-Vegetation-Removal-Permits.aspx>. Bonds shall be furnished with the selective vegetation removal application form to the official assigned to receive selective vegetation removal applications at the local North Carolina Department of Transportation, Division of Highways Office;
- (5) The permittee shall provide proof of liability insurance coverage of five million dollars (\$5,000,000). Whoever performs the work, the permittee, his or her contractor, or agent shall maintain workers' compensation and vehicle liability insurance coverage. The permittee, his or her contractor, and agent shall be liable for any losses due to the negligence or willful misconduct of his or her agents, assigns, or employees. The permittee, in lieu of providing proof of liability insurance as described in this Item, may be shown as an additional insured on the general liability policy of the approved contractor or agent to perform the permitted work if the contractor or agent's policy provides five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in coverage, and the permittee provides the Department with proof of the coverage. The permittee, contractor, or agent providing the coverage shall also name the Department as an additional insured on its general liability policy, and provide the Department with a copy of the certificate showing the Department named as an additional insured. The required limit of insurance may be obtained by a single general liability policy, the combination of a general liability and excess liability, or an umbrella policy;
- (6) The permittee shall provide a document verifying the requested selective vegetation removal site location in relationship to corporate limits of a municipality, pursuant to G.S. 136-133.1(a)(5). The document shall be a current geographic information system map of the nearest municipality, with color-coded boundary lines, a corresponding key or legend indicating corporate limits, territorial jurisdiction boundaries, and indicating the precise location of the outdoor advertising structure. The permittee shall provide the property tax identification number for the parcel where the outdoor advertising structure is located. The Department may require additional information if the boundary or sign location remains in question;
- (7) The permittee shall perform site marking of the maximum vegetation cut or removal zone. The applicant shall mark the proper permitted cutting distances according to G.S. 136-133.1(a)(1) – (6). Points A & B along the right-of-way boundary (or fence if there is a control of access fence) shall be marked with visible flagging tape. Points C, D, and E along the edge of the pavement of the travel way shall be marked with spray paint, including the actual distances. If the sign is located at an acceleration or deceleration ramp, points C, D, and E shall be marked along the edge of the pavement of the travel way of the ramp instead of the mainline of the roadway;

- (8) The permittee shall perform tagging of trees. The permittee shall tag with a visible material or flagging all trees, including existing trees and other trees that are, at the time of the selective vegetation removal application, greater than four inches in diameter as measured six inches from the ground and requested to be cut, thinned, pruned, or removed. The applicant shall tag the existing trees (the exact same existing trees as on the site plan) that are desired to be cut, thinned, pruned, or removed with visible material or contrasting colored flagging. The permittee shall denote on the site plan or application the colors of flagging used to mark each category of trees;
- (9) If there are existing trees requested for removal, the permittee shall satisfy the following before any work may be performed:
  - (a) submit the reimbursement to the Department pursuant to G.S. 136-133.1(d) in a cashier's check or certified check;
  - (b) fully disassemble two non-conforming outdoor advertising signs, their supporting structures, and return the outdoor advertising permits tags to the Department pursuant to G.S. 136-133.1(d); or
  - (c) obtain Departmental approval for the replanting plan in accordance with G.S. 136-133.1(e) and Rule .0611 of this Section;
- (10) Should the vegetation removal permit be approved and tree removal is scheduled, the sign owner shall cut all disputed tree stumps in a level, horizontal manner, uniformly across the stump, and at a four inch height, so that tree rings may be counted, by the applicant or the Department, to determine the age of the tree;
- (11) After a tree is removed and the applicant or the Department discovers, based on the number of rings in the tree stump, an error in the tree survey report or site plan, the Department shall request an amendment to the tree survey report or site plan, a redetermination shall be made by the Department, pursuant to G.S. 136-133.1(d) and (e), and the applicant shall be subject to that redetermination;
- (12) For purposes of this Rule, the portion of the cut or removal zone means that the cut or removal zone shall be less than the entirety of the cut or removal zone. Where any portion of the cut or vegetation removal zone is restricted for the following reasons in this Item, the permittee shall comply with applicable conditions, mitigation requirements, rules, statutes, or permit requirements related to cutting, thinning, pruning, or removal of vegetation within the right-of-way:
  - (a) the State is subjected to or agrees in writing to subject itself to conditions affecting the right-of-way, including conservation agreements, prior to September 1, 2011, or prior to the issuance of an outdoor advertising permit for the erection of the applicable outdoor advertising structure, whichever date is later;
  - (b) applicable State or federal statutes, rules, or regulations, including any conditions mandated as part of the issuance of a permit to the Department for a construction project by a federal or State agency with jurisdiction over the construction project prohibit vegetation removal;
  - (c) mitigation within the right-of-way in the cut zone of a permitted outdoor advertising structure prohibits vegetation removal; however, trees and other plant materials for mitigation may not be of a projected mature height to decrease the visibility of a sign face; or
  - (d) If the reasons set forth in Sub-items (12)(a), (b), and (c) of this Rule allow certain degrees and methods of cutting, thinning, pruning, or removal for portions of vegetation, the permittee shall comply with the conditions of this Item, including equipment type for those portions of the cutting or removal zone. Vegetation removal for portions of the maximum cutting or removal zone not affected by the reasons set forth in Sub-items (12)(a), (b) and (c) of this Rule shall be governed by standards set out in G.S. 136-93;
- (13) The permittee shall adhere to erosion control requirements, pursuant to G.S. 113A, Article 4;
- (14) A Division of Highways Inspector may be present while work is underway. The presence or absence of a Division of Highways inspector at the work site does not lessen the permittee's responsibility for conformity with the requirements of the permit. If a present inspector fails to acknowledge or identify work that does not conform with the requirements, this failure shall not prevent later notification to the permittee that the work is noncompliant with the permit;
- (15) A selective vegetation removal permit shall be secured for each applicable outdoor advertising site prior to performing any vegetation removal work;

- (16) If the Division Engineer or his or her representative observes unsafe operations, activities, or conditions, the Engineer shall suspend work. Work shall not resume until the unsafe operations, activities, or conditions have been eliminated or corrected. Failure to comply with any of the federal and State laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations governing safety and traffic control shall result in suspension of work. The permittee shall adhere to safety requirements, pursuant to G.S. 95, Article 16. Traffic control shall be in accordance with G.S. 136-30 and 19A NCAC 02B .0208;
- (17) The applicant shall certify that he or she has permission from the adjoining landowner(s) to access the private property for the purpose of conducting activities related to the selective vegetation removal permit application;
- (18) The permittee, its contractor, or agent shall have a copy of the selective vegetation removal permit on the work site at all times during any phase of selective vegetation cutting, thinning, trimming, pruning, removal, or planting operations;
- (19) The permittee, its contractor, or agent shall take measures to locate and protect utilities within the highway right-of-way and within the work area of the selective vegetation removal zone. The permittee may be responsible for restoration of any losses or damages to utilities caused by any actions of the permittee, its contractors, or agents, and to the satisfaction of the utility owner;
- (20) Permits are valid for a period of one year and the permittee may cut, thin, prune, or remove vegetation more than one time during the permit year. If the applicant applies for and is approved for another permit at the same site during an existing permit year, the previous permit shall become null and void at the same time the new permit is issued;
- (21) The permittee shall provide to the Department a 48-hour notification before entering the right-of-way for any work covered by the conditions of the permit. The permittee shall schedule all work with the Department. The permittee shall notify the Department in advance of work scheduled for nights, weekends and State holidays. The Department may modify the permittee's work schedule for nights, weekends, and State holidays. When the Department restricts construction in work zones for the safety of the traveling public, the Department shall deny access to the right-of-way for selective vegetation removal;
- (22) If work is planned in an active work zone, the permittee shall receive written permission from the contractor or the Department if the Department's employees are performing the work. The permittee shall provide the Division Engineer with a copy of the written permission;
- (23) An applicant shall be allowed to use individual and manual-operated power equipment and hand held tools at any site during initial cutting or removal of vegetation or while maintaining a site during the duration of a selected vegetation removal permit. The Department may allow use of power-driven vegetation removal equipment (such as excavator-based land clearing attachments, skid-steer cutters, and bucket trucks) if the Department determines that the use of such equipment will not cause safety hazards, any erosion, or damage to the right-of-way, and may allow access from the private property side to the right-of-way. Tree removal that presents a hazard from falling tree parts shall be performed in accordance with the current edition of the American National Standard for Arboricultural Operations-Safety Requirements ANSI Z133;
- (24) The height of stumps remaining after tree removal shall not exceed four inches above the surrounding ground level. At the end of each workday, the work site shall be left with all vegetation cut, thinned, or pruned at the site either removed or chipped and spread in accordance with G.S. 136-133.4; and
- (25) Upon completion of all work, the Department shall notify the permittee in writing of acceptance, terminate the permit, and return the Performance Bond, certified check, or cashier's check to the permittee. For replanting work, a different bond release schedule shall be applicable according to Rule .0611 of this Section. The permittee may terminate the permit at any time and request that the Department return of the Performance Bond, certified check, or cashier's check. The termination and request for return of the Performance Bond, certified check, or cashier's check shall be made in writing and sent to the Division Engineer.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 136-18(5); 136-18(7); 136-18(9); 136-93; 136-93.2; 136-127; 136-130; 136-133.1; 136-133.2; 136-133.3; 136-133.4;  
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