



ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

Guidelines for Preparing Vegetation Control Plans and Work Schedule

Applicants must develop and submit the following plans and a work schedule to the District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator along with their Adopt-A-Highway Program Application. Applications will not be processed until these documents are received and approved. All costs incurred for adoption activities, including materials, equipment rental, and labor charges are the sole responsibility of the adopter. *It is strongly recommended that adopters consult with a Caltrans Landscape Architect or Landscape Specialist before preparing the following documents.* If available, Caltrans may provide base plans of the proposed adoption area for reference purposes.

1. Vegetation Control Plan

Prospective adopters must provide a plan (or map) that illustrates the location of the vegetation control site within the highway right of way. If the proposed location requires further clarification, a written description should be included. The plan(s) must comply with the following guidelines:

Proposed Location

- Vegetation control sites must cover approximately five acres (net) or two miles of highway.
- Vegetation control may not be performed within six feet of a traffic lane.
- Vegetation control may not be performed on slopes steeper than approximately 40°.
- Trees or shrubs equal to, or greater than, 15 feet in height may not be pruned by adopters.
- Vegetation control activities must be performed adjacent to fences, drainage facilities, and other structures.

2. Work Plan

Your work plan must describe the vegetation control operations to be performed. Any assistance to be provided by Caltrans (i.e., disposal of debris) must be included in the work plan.

- Describe of the type of vegetation to be controlled.
- Describe control method(s) to be used. Methods should take into account the type and density of weeds, soil conditions, and slopes. Typically, vegetation control activities include one or more of the following tasks: hand-pulling, hoeing, pruning, mowing, weed-whipping, mulching, and/or herbicide application.
- Indicate whether or not litter removal prior to vegetation control is required.
- If applicable, describe how any resulting vegetation debris and/or litter will be removed from the site.

Use of Mulch: Mulch must be applied to provide a four- to six-inch layer. Mulch should not be placed in drainage facilities or within one-foot of the trunks of existing trees and shrubs. If you plan to use mulch, please obtain a copy of the *Guidelines for Using Mulch* handout from your District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator before proceeding.

Use of Herbicides: If your work plan includes the use of herbicides, please request a copy of the *Working With Contractors* or the *Caltrans Licensing Requirements for Adopt-A-Highway Volunteers Using Herbicides* handout from your District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator before proceeding. Only Caltrans-approved herbicides may be used on the State right of way.

Use of Motorized Equipment: It is recommended that only contractors be allowed to use motorized equipment to perform adoption tasks. However, at the discretion of Districts, volunteers that routinely perform landscape maintenance tasks in a professional capacity, may be permitted to use motorized equipment on State right of way.

Use of Contractors: If your group intends to hire a contractor to perform any portion of your adoption work, please obtain a copy of the *Working With Contractors* handout from your District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator before proceeding.

3. Work Schedule for Vegetation Control Activities

A five-year, work schedule must be submitted along with the vegetation control plan and work plan. Statewide guidelines require that you provide vegetation control a minimum of two times a year. However, you may be required to work more often if necessary to keep the area in a neat and clean condition. Plan to control weeds before they reach six inches in height or before they produce seeds. In order to avoid accidentally starting a fire, do not plan to use power equipment for weed control during periods when weeds and brush are dry.

Note: Changes to work schedules once an encroachment permit has been issued must be approved by the District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator.

4. Requirements for Renewing Vegetation Control Adoptions

Near the end of your encroachment permit period, your adoption site will be reviewed by a District Maintenance field representative and either a District Landscape Architect or a District Landscape Specialist. If changes in adoption requirements are recommended (i.e. increased work frequency), the District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator will communicate these to you.

Groups who wish apply for another five-year encroachment permit must provide a new or amended vegetation control plan and/or work plan to reflect any changes. If there are no changes, copies of existing plans may be submitted along with the application.

Whether or not there have been any changes in the adoption requirements, all groups who reapply must provide a revised work schedule for the new encroachment permit period.