



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL

CODE 500 (AC.)

DEFINITION

Removal and disposal of buildings, structures, other works of improvement, vegetation, debris, or other materials.

PURPOSES

The purpose of this practice is to safely remove and dispose of unwanted obstructions in order to apply conservation practices or facilitate the planned land use.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on any land where existing obstructions interfere with planned land use development, public safety or infrastructure. This standard is not intended for the removal of obstructions from aquatic environments.

FEDERAL, TRIBAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LAWS

Users of this standard should be aware of potentially applicable federal, tribal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, or permit requirements governing obstruction removal. This standard does not contain the text of federal, tribal, state, or local laws.

CRITERIA

The following criteria apply to all purposes:

- Rock piles, boulders, stones, fences, hedge rows, abandoned buildings and structures, trash, and similar obstructions that would interfere with planned use and development shall be removed.
- All debris such as broken concrete and masonry, structural steel and wood, stones, stumps, slash, and sterile or toxic soil material shall be disposed of so that they will not impede subsequent work or cause damage to off-site or other areas.
- Dispose of inorganic materials such as rock piles, boulders, stones, concrete or masonry structures, and metal or concrete fence posts by reusing, removal, or burial at approved locations.
- Dispose of organic materials such as wooden fence posts, woody vegetation, and woody building materials by removal to an approved landfill or recycling center, burial at an approved location or burning. If burning is used, implement appropriate smoke management to protect public health and safety.

- When removing buildings, ensure that all utilities, such as gas and electric, have been shut off and disconnected from the structure before beginning demolition.
- Reshape and regrade all areas disturbed by the obstruction removal so that they blend with the surrounding land features and conditions. Any foundations or below-ground portions of the obstruction that remain in place or buried materials shall have sufficient soil cover to meet the requirements of the planned land use. Compact fill areas according to site-specific requirements.
- All required gully shaping shall be performed to specified dimensions and grades. Gully fills shall be compacted to the required density.
- Revegetate or otherwise protect from erosion disturbed areas as soon as possible after construction according to Wisconsin NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (WI NRCS CPS), Critical Area Planting (342).
- Historically or archaeologically significant and scenic values shall be identified and preserved as appropriate.
- The removal of obstructions can expose toxic or polluted materials. If toxic or polluted materials are expected to be found during the obstruction removal, specify appropriate handling and disposal criteria in the plans and specifications.
- When removing obstructions that contain chromated copper arsenate (CCA) treated wood, do not burn the wood. Burning of CCA treated wood can release toxic amounts of arsenic into the air and ash that are very harmful to human and animal health. CCA treated wood should be buried in an approved landfill.

VI. CONSIDERATIONS

Additional recommendations relating to design which may enhance the use of, or avoid problems with, this practice, but are not required to ensure its basic conservation function are as follows:

- The recycling or reuse of materials should be considered as the first option for disposal of materials from obstruction removal. Most woody debris can be recycled into mulch or other products. Recycling or other environmentally friendly options exist for the disposal of many other materials as well.
- Demolition activities can generate large amounts of dust. Where necessary, use dust suppression techniques such as spraying water on the removal site to suppress dust.
- Obstruction removal can result in the disturbance of large areas that are subject to erosion during the demolition process. Where necessary include provisions in the plans to control erosion and off-site sedimentation.
- Obstruction removal often involves heavy equipment working in environmentally sensitive areas. Ensure that servicing and refueling of equipment is done in a manner that minimizes spills and volatilization.
- Demolition of structures and the removal of debris can be a hazardous undertaking. This is especially true for the removal of downed and tangled trees. This type of work should be done by well qualified personnel with proper equipment following appropriate safety procedures.
- Rock piles or stone fences should be removed from crop fields.
- Consider the use of native species for re-vegetation of disturbed areas.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Prepare plans and specifications for obstruction removal that describe the requirements for applying the practice according to this standard. Plans and specifications for this practice can be included in the plans and specifications for the practice it supports. As a minimum the plans and specifications shall include:

- A plan view showing the location of the obstruction removal site,
- Details and location for the disposal of materials from the obstruction removal,
- Details of how the site will be stabilized after construction, and
- Construction specifications that describe in writing, site-specific requirements for the obstruction removal.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An Operation and Maintenance Plan shall be developed that is consistent with the purpose of this practice, intended life of the components, and criteria for design.

REFERENCES

USDA, NRCS, Wisconsin Field Office Technical Guide, Section IV, Conservation Practice Standards and Specifications.

U. S. Department of Labor. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Safety and Health Regulations for Construction, 29 CFR 1926. U. S. Washington, DC.

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