

Off-track – Manage vegetation (manual and motor manual)

Scope	Includes:	Manual and motor manual clearance of vegetation on all of Network Rail controlled infrastructure
	Excludes:	Work at height involving climbing or access platforms

Preparation

Tools and equipment required, but not limited to:

Manual

- Hand saw
- Pruning shears
- High pruner
- Hedge shears
- Knapsack sprayer

Motor manual

- Chainsaw
- Pole saw
- Clearing saw/brush cutter
- Strimmer
- Hedge trimmer
- Third party considerations

Work planning considerations:

- Weather precautions
- Environmental considerations (including noise, neighbours and protected sites and species)
- Access considerations
- Presence of lineside cables and associated furniture
- Brush clearance and strimming of large areas should be assessed for mechanical options
- Disposal of arisings
- Third party considerations

Method

Manual

Felling

1. The height of the tree shall be considered before felling
2. The tree or shrub shall be felled leaving a stump that is as low to ground level as practicable
 - An exclusion distance equivalent to 2× the total height of the target material shall be maintained between staff while hand felling woody vegetation

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Pruning

3. The unwanted material shall be severed leaving a small pruning collar while taking care not to damage the retained material
4. Hand pruning shall only be undertaken from ground level
 - When undertaking hand pruning of material located above head height a high pruner shall be used, a minimum 5 metre exclusion distance shall be established

Herbicide application

5. Application of herbicides requires careful planning, strict on-site supervision, and detailed checks of completed sites
 - Only skilled, competent personnel, experienced in vegetation management and herbicide use shall undertake herbicide application
6. Herbicides shall not be applied in wet or windy weather, or when rain is forecast within 2 hours
 - Cancelled operations shall be re-scheduled
7. Cut stumps – herbicide and marker dye shall be applied to the cut stump face within 15 minutes of cutting while ensuring non-target stumps or plants are not treated
 - Herbicide shall never be applied to pruning stumps
8. Stump re-growth – herbicide and marker dye shall be applied to the foliage growing from the target stump while ensuring that non-target stumps or plants are not treated

Motor manual – the following methods shall be used by operatives, where relevant, while undertaking motor manual vegetation management with powered tools

Exclusion zones

9. When using motor manual equipment a minimum 5 metre exclusion distance shall be established around the operator

Felling

10. Chainsaw competency restrictions, including maximum dimension of trees or shrubs that can be felled shall be strictly adhered to
11. The target tree or shrub shall be felled leaving a stump that is as low to ground level as practicable. An exclusion distance equivalent to 2× the total height of the target material shall be established
12. Where complete removal of the tree has occurred, herbicide application as detailed in steps 5 to 8 shall be carried out as required