

Tennessee Valley Authority Right-of-Way Clearing Specifications

1. **General** - The clearing contractor shall review the environmental evaluation documents (categorical exclusion checklist, environmental assessment, or environmental impact statement) for the project or proposed activity, along with all clearing and construction appendices, conditions in applicable general and/or site-specific permits, the storm water pollution prevention plan, and any Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) commitments to property owners. The contractor shall then plan and carry out operations using techniques consistent with good engineering and management practices as outlined in TVA's A Guide for Environmental Protection and Best Management Practices for Tennessee Valley Authority Construction and Maintenance Activities (TVA, 2022). The contractor will protect areas that are to be left unaffected by access or clearing work at and adjacent to all work sites. In sensitive areas and their buffers, the contractor will retain as much native ground cover and other vegetation as possible.

If the contractor fails to use BMPs or to follow environmental expectations discussed in the prebid or prework meeting or present in contract specifications, TVA will order corrective changes and additional work as deemed necessary in TVA's judgment to meet the intent of environmental laws and regulations or other guidelines. Major violations or continued minor violations will result in work suspension until correction of the situation is achieved or other remedial action is taken at the contractor's expense. Penalty clauses may be invoked as appropriate.

2. **Regulations** - The clearing contractor shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local environmental and antipollution laws, regulations, and ordinances including without limitation all air, water, solid and hazardous waste, noise, and nuisance laws, regulations, and ordinances. The contractor shall secure or ensure that TVA has secured all necessary permits or authorizations to conduct work on the acres shown on the drawings and plan and profile for the contract. The contractor's designated project manager will actively seek to prevent, control, monitor, and safely abate all commonly recognized forms of workplace and environmental pollution. Permits or authorizations and any necessary certifications of trained or licensed employees shall be documented with copies submitted to TVA's ROW forester or project environmental person before work begins. The contractor will be responsible for meeting all conditions specified in permits. Permit conditions shall be reviewed in prework discussions.
3. **Land and Landscape Preservation** - The clearing contractor shall exercise care to preserve the condition of cleared soils by avoiding as much compacting and deep scarring as possible. As soon as possible after initial disturbance of the soil and in accordance with any permit(s) or other state or local environmental regulatory requirements, cover material shall be placed to prevent erosion and sedimentation of water bodies or conveyances to surface water or groundwater. In areas outside the clearing, use, and access areas, the natural vegetation shall be protected from damage. The contractor and his employees must not deviate from delineated access routes or use areas and must enter the site at designated areas that will be marked. Clearing operations shall be conducted to prevent any unnecessary destruction, scarring, or defacing of the remaining natural vegetation and adjacent surroundings in the

vicinity of the work. In sensitive public or environmental areas, appropriate buffer zones shall be observed and the methods of clearing or reclearing modified to protect the buffer and sensitive area. Some areas may require planting native plants or grasses to meet the criteria of regulatory agencies or commitments to special program interests.

4. **Streamside Management Zones** - The clearing contractor must leave as many rooted ground cover plants as possible in buffer zones along streams and other bodies of water or wet-weather conveyances thereto. In such streamside management zones (SMZ), tall-growing tree species (trees that would interfere with TVA's National Electrical Safety Code clearances) shall be cut, and the stumps may be treated to prevent resprouting. Low-growing trees identified by TVA as marginal electrical clearance problems may be cut, and then stump treated with growth regulators to allow low, slow-growing canopy development and active root growth. Only approved herbicides shall be used, and herbicide application shall be conducted by certified applicators from TVA's Transmission, Operations, and Maintenance (TOM) organization after initial clearing and construction. Cutting of trees within SMZs must be accomplished by using either hand-held equipment or other appropriate clearing equipment, such as a feller-buncher. The method will be selected based on site-specific conditions and topography to minimize soil disturbance and impacts to the SMZ and surrounding area. Disturbed soils in SMZs must be stabilized by appropriate methods immediately after the right-of-way is cleared. Stabilization must occur within the time frame specified in applicable storm water permits or regulations. Stumps within SMZs may be cut close to the ground but must not be removed or uprooted. Trees, limbs, and debris shall be immediately removed from streams, ditches, and wet areas using methods that will minimize dragging or scarring the banks or stream bottom. No debris will be left in the water or watercourse. Equipment will cross streams, ditches, or wet areas only at locations designated by TVA after the application of appropriate erosion control BMPs consistent with permit conditions or regulatory requirements.
5. **Wetlands** - In forested wetlands, tall trees will be cut near the ground, leaving stumps and roots in place. The cambium may be treated with herbicides applied by certified applicators from the TOM organization to prevent regrowth. Understory trees that must be initially cut and removed may be allowed to grow back or may be treated with tree growth regulators selectively to slow growth and increase the reclearing cycle. The decision will be situationally made based on existing ground cover, wetland type, and tree species since tall tree removal may "release" understory species and allow them to grow quickly to "electrical clearance problem" heights. In many circumstances, herbicides labeled for water and wetland use may be used in reclearing.
6. **Sensitive Area Preservation** - If prehistoric or historic artifacts or features that might be of archaeological significance are discovered during clearing or reclearing operations, the activity shall immediately cease within a 100-foot radius, and a TVA ROW forester or project environmental person and the Cultural Resources Program manager shall be notified. The site shall be protected and left as found until a determination about the resources, their significance, and site treatment is made by TVA's Cultural Resources Program. Work may continue beyond the finding zone and the 100-foot radius beyond its perimeter.

7. **Water Quality Control** - The contractor's clearing and disposal activities shall be performed using BMPs that will prevent erosion and entrance of spillage, contaminants, debris, and other pollutants or objectionable materials into drainage ways, surface water, or groundwater. Special care shall be exercised in refueling equipment to prevent spills. Fueling areas shall be remote from any sinkhole, crevice, stream, or other water body. Open burning debris will be kept away from streams and ditches and shall be incorporated into the soil.

The clearing contractor will erect and (when TVA or contract construction personnel are unable) maintain BMPs such as silt fences on steep slopes and adjacent to any stream, wetland, or other water body. BMPs will be inspected by the environmental technician or other designated TVA or contractor personnel routinely and during periods of high runoff, and any necessary repairs will be made as soon as practicable. BMP inspections will be conducted in accordance with permit requirements. Records of all inspections will be maintained on site, and copies of inspection forms will be forwarded to the project environmental person.

8. **Turbidity and Blocking of Streams** - If temporary clearing activities must interrupt natural drainage, appropriate drainage facilities and erosion/sediment controls shall be provided to avoid erosion and siltation of streams and other water bodies or water conveyances. Turbidity levels in receiving waters or at storm water discharge points shall be monitored, documented, and reported if required by the applicable permit. Erosion and sediment control measures such as silt fences, water bars, and sediment traps shall be installed as soon as practicable after initial access, site, or right-of-way disturbance in accordance with applicable permit or regulatory requirements.

Mechanized equipment shall not be operated in flowing water except when approved and, then, only to construct necessary stream crossings under direct guidance of TVA. Construction of stream fords or other crossings will only be permitted at approved locations and to current TVA construction access road standards. Material shall not be deposited in watercourses or within stream bank areas where it could be washed away by high stream flows. Any clearing debris that enters streams or other water bodies shall be removed as soon as possible. Appropriate U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and state permits shall be obtained for stream crossings.

9. **Air Quality Control** - The clearing or reclearing contractor shall take appropriate actions to limit the amount of air emissions created by clearing and disposal operations to well within the limits of clearing or burning permits and/or forestry or local fire department requirements. All operations must be conducted in a manner that prevents nuisance conditions or damage to adjacent land crops, dwellings, highways, or people.
10. **Dust and Mud Control** - Clearing activities shall be conducted in a manner that minimizes the creation of fugitive dust. This may require limitations as to type of equipment, allowable speeds, and routes utilized. Control measures such as water, gravel, etc., or similar measures may be used subject to TVA approval. On new construction sites and easements, the last 100 feet before an access road approaches a county road or highway shall be graveled to prevent transfer of mud onto the public road.

11. **Burning** - The contractor shall obtain applicable permits and approvals to conduct controlled burning. The contractor will comply with all provisions of the permit, notification, or authorization including burning site locations, controlled draft, burning hours, and such other conditions as stipulated. If weather conditions such as wind speed or wind direction change rapidly, the contractor's burning operation may be temporarily stopped by TVA's ROW forester or project environmental person. The debris to be burned shall be kept as clean and dry as possible and stacked and burned in a manner that produces the minimum amount of smoke. Residue from burning will be disposed of according to permit stipulations. No fuel starters or enhancements other than kerosene will be allowed.
12. **Smoke and Odors** - The contractor will properly store and handle combustible and volatile materials that could create objectionable smoke, odor, or fumes. The contractor shall not burn oil or refuse that includes trash, rags, tires, plastics, or other manufactured debris.
13. **Vehicle Exhaust Emissions** - The contractor shall maintain and operate equipment in a manner that limits vehicle exhaust emissions. Equipment and vehicles will be kept within the manufacturers' recommended limits and tolerances. Excessive exhaust gases will be eliminated, and inefficient operating procedures will be revised or halted until corrective repairs or adjustments are made.
14. **Vehicle Servicing** - Routine maintenance of personal vehicles will not be performed on the right-of-way. However, if emergency or "have to" situations arise, minimal/temporary maintenance to personal vehicles will occur in order to mobilize the vehicle to an off-site maintenance shop. Heavy equipment will be serviced on the right-of-way, except in designated sensitive areas. The clearing or reclearing contractor will properly maintain these vehicles with approved spill protection controls and countermeasures. If emergency maintenance in a sensitive or questionable area arises, the project environmental person will be consulted. All wastes and used oils will be properly recovered, handled, and disposed/recycled. Equipment shall not be temporarily stored in stream floodplains, whether overnight or on weekends or holidays.
15. **Noise Control** - The contractor shall take steps to avoid the creation of excessive sound levels for employees, the public, or the site and adjacent property owners. Concentration of individual noisy pieces as well as the hours and locations of operation should be considered.
16. **Noise Suppression** - All internal combustion engines shall be properly equipped with mufflers. The equipment and mufflers shall be maintained at peak operating efficiency.
17. **Sanitation** - A designated representative of TVA or the clearing contractor shall contact a sanitary contractor who will provide sanitary chemical toilets convenient to all principal points of operation for every working party. The facilities shall comply with applicable federal, state, or local health laws and regulations. They shall not be located closer than 100 feet to any stream or tributary or to any wetland. The facilities shall be required to have proper servicing and maintenance, and the waste disposal contractor shall verify in writing that the waste disposal

will be in state-approved facilities. Employees shall be notified of sanitation regulations and shall be required to use the toilet facilities.

18. **Refuse Disposal** - The clearing or reclearing contractor shall be responsible for daily cleanup and proper labeling, storage, and disposal of all refuse and debris on the site produced by his operations and employees. Facilities that meet applicable regulations and guidelines for refuse collection will be required. Only approved transport, storage, and disposal areas shall be used.
19. **Brush and Timber Disposal (Reclearing)** - The reclearing contractor shall place felled tree boles in neat stacks at the edge of the right-of-way, with crossing breaks at least every 100 feet. Property owner requests shall be reviewed with the project manager or right-of-way specialist before accepting them. Lop and drop activities must be specified in the contract and on plan and profile drawings with verification with the right-of-way specialist before conducting such work. When tree trimming and chipping is necessary, disposal of the chips on the easement or other locations on the property must be with the consent of the property owner and the approval of the right-of-way specialist. No trees, branches, or chips shall remain in a surface water body or be placed at a location where washing into a surface water or groundwater source might occur.
20. **Brush and Timber Disposal (Initial Clearing)** - For initial clearing, trees are commonly part of the contractor's contract to remove as they wish. Trees may be removed from the site for lumber or pulpwood, or they may be chipped or stacked and burned. All such activities must be coordinated with the TVA ROW forester, and the open burning permits, notifications, and regulatory requirements must be met. Trees may be cut and left in place only in areas specified by TVA and approved by appropriate regulatory agencies. These areas may include sensitive wetlands or SMZs where tree removal would cause excessive ground disturbance or in very rugged terrain where windrowed trees are used as sediment barriers along the edge of the right-of-way.
21. **Restoration of Site** - All disturbed areas, except for farmland under cultivation and any other areas as may be designated by TVA's specifications, shall be stabilized in the following manner unless the property owner and TVA's ROW forester or project environmental person specify a different method:
 - a. The subsoil shall be loosened to a minimum depth of 6 inches if possible and worked to remove unnatural ridges and depressions.
 - b. If needed, appropriate soil amendments will be added.
 - c. All disturbed areas will initially be seeded with a temporary ground cover such as winter wheat, rye, or millet, depending on the season. Perennials may also be planted during initial seeding if proper growing conditions exist. Final restoration and final seeding will be performed as line construction is completed. Final seeding will consist of permanent perennial grasses such as those outlined in TVA's A Guide for Environmental Protection and Best Management Practices for Tennessee Valley Authority Construction and

Maintenance Activities (TVA, 2022). Exceptions would include those areas designated as native grass planting areas. Initial and final restoration will be performed by the clearing contractor.

- d. TVA holds the option, depending upon the time of year and weather condition, to delay or withdraw the requirement of seeding until more favorable planting conditions are certain. In the meantime, other stabilization techniques must be applied.

References

Tennessee Valley Authority. 2022. *A Guide for Environmental Protection and Best Management Practices for Tennessee Valley Authority Construction and Maintenance Activities, Revision 4*. Edited by S.T. Benefield, R.L. Brannon, J.C. Buttram, B.V. Dalton, G.D. Dalton, C.A. Henley, W.G. Martin, A.E. Masters, C.L. Phillips, C.A. Suttles, and R.C. Wilson. Chattanooga, TN. Retrieved from <<https://www.tva.com/Energy/Transmission-System/Transmission-System-Projects>> (n.d.).

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