

Weed Control & Fire Hazard Reduction Guidelines for MacDonnell Regional Council

Working toward Best Practice

2020 - 2023



Effective July 2015

Review conducted January 2020

Next Review due January 2022

Weed Control & Fire Hazard Reduction three (3) level implementation program 2020-2023

The MacDonnell Regional Council has developed Weed Control & Fire Hazard Reduction Guidelines to improve the safety of its communities. At the same time, a Council goal is Healthy Communities – where we work to improve environmental health outcomes. The success of any Weed Control & Fire Hazard Reduction plan is based on six (6) factors – Slashing, mowing, chemical spraying, clearing, manual control and pruning (tree lopping). This set of guidelines also can be applied to any other contracts the Council provides for other agencies (ie. PowerWater, at its Power house & Sewerage ponds and the NT Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics for its airstrips.)

These guidelines provide a three (3) level implementation plan for Weed Control & Fire Hazard Reduction on communities to reach a service level standard within the various timeframes, taking into account the Regional Council's Goal of Healthy Communities; and, also in accordance with relevant legislation, including the *Weeds Management Act*.

Intent: to achieve best practice in Weed Control & Fire Hazard Reduction across the Region.

In commencing this three (3) level implementation plan, it should be noted

Most Regional Council Service Delivery Centres (SDCs) have made significant advancements in improving their Weed Control & Fire Hazard Reduction over the past twelve (12) years.

In outlining the targets of the three (3) service level guidelines, we note that some SDCs have already achieved some of the targets for various levels. These sites will be required to continue implementing acceptable standards and practices that have not yet been met. The objective is for relevant SDCs to meet each service level's targets for Weed Control & Fire Hazard Reduction. Achieving the next level's targets is encouraged.

Six (6) priority actions have been identified for Weed Control & Fire Hazard Reduction in the Region. These actions are to be achieved in each community by the end of the three (3) service level periods that this plan applies.

Priority Actions

1. Slashing	SL1	4. Clearing	SL2
2. Mowing	SL1	5. Manual Control	SL3
3. Chemical Spraying	SL2	6. Pruning – Tree lopping	SL3

Service Level One: Slashing and Mowing/Whipper Snipping

Actions at this level are to ensure that all public areas within the community are not overgrown, thus reducing the risk of fire hazard. Additionally, well maintained public areas improve the overall look of the community and keep them safe from snakes and other vermin.

It is expected that staff directly involved in Weed Control & Fire Hazard Reduction undertake training in Certificate II Rural Operations as provided by MRC. Through this training, staff participate in relevant training that includes: Identifying hazards & waste; planning & organising work; participate in WHS processes; operate basic machinery and equipment; operate & maintain chainsaws; repairs & maintenance of machinery; and, treat weeds.

Actions are to be taken to commence and complete Service Level One requirements in the timeframes below.

Service Level One Targets	Anticipated Time Frame	Completed (Y/N)
<i>Slashing</i>		
Slash public areas regularly	As required	
Ensure tractor and slasher is well maintained	On going	
<i>Mowing/Whipper Snipping</i>		
Mow and cut public grassed areas regularly	As required	
Whipper snip around road furniture and other infrastructure	As required	
<i>Staff Management</i>		
PPE (safety wear) for all staff	On-going	
Fire preparedness equipment is maintained	On-going	
Other staff are trained in the safe use of required equipment	12 months	



Service Level Two: Chemical Spraying and Clearing

Actions at this level are to control future weed growth and clearing firebreaks to reduce the fire hazard for a community and its residents.

Service Level Two Targets	Anticipated Time Frame	Completed (Y/N)
<i>Chemical Spraying</i>		
Spray public areas adjacent to roads, parks, buildings, etc. with relevant chemicals (ie. Roundup).	12 months	
<i>Maintenance of Firebreaks</i>		
Clear firebreaks around Community boundaries, buildings and Council assets.	12 months	
<i>Staff Management</i>		
PPE (safety wear) for all staff	On-going	
Staff are trained in the safe use of chemicals and identifying hazards & waste	12 months	



Service Level Three: Manual Control and Pruning (tree lopping)

At this level, actions are aimed at removing future obstacles or other fire hazards that may affect a community.

Actions for this level should be carried out as necessary.

Service Level Three Targets	Anticipated Time Frame	Completed (Y/N)
Manual Clearing of Fire Hazards		
Staff to clear any fire hazard obstacles that may affect their community. This may include manually clearing debris, doing controlled burning, etc.	12 months	
Pruning (tree lopping)		
Staff using chain saws and other equipment prune overhanging tree branches to reduce the fire hazard within the community	12 months	
Staff Management		
PPE (safety wear) for all staff	On-going	
Staff are trained in WHS processes and learn how to identify hazards and waste	12 months	
Staff are trained in how to operate & maintain chainsaws	12 months	
Staff are trained in basic fire management practices	12 months	

