

## THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NELSON

**POLICY TITLE:** Integrated Vegetation Management

**POLICY NO:** 8500.00.045

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**SUPERSEDES:** None

**APPROVAL:** City Manager and Council

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### PURPOSE

This policy applies to all vegetation and pest management activities undertaken by Nelson Hydro employees, contractors, and consultants within the Nelson Hydro service territory, who plan, permit, engage, approve, monitor or report on vegetation and pest management on wooden poles, transmission and distribution or statutory rights-of-way, substations/yards, generation sites, and all other Nelson Hydro assets and facilities within the Nelson Hydro service territory.

### POLICY

Nelson Hydro will manage vegetation and pest risks to protect public and worker safety, maintain system reliability, and uphold environmental stewardship in compliance with all applicable municipal, provincial, and federal laws and regulations.

This Policy is the governing document over the following supporting operational documents:

1. **Five Year Integrated Vegetation Management Plan:** operationalizes annual scope (zones/segments), cycle lengths, budget allocations, and patrol expectations.
2. **Vegetation Best Management Practices:** provides method standards including clearances; riparian/terrain/soil restrictions; debris management thresholds; herbicide methods/limits; monitoring cadence.
3. **Nesting Bird Best Management Practices:** provides survey timing, species specific buffers, and stop/start work protocols for vegetation management performed in proximity to nesting birds.
4. **Vegetation Public Engagement Framework:** sets engagement principles, roles, tools, and dispute resolution processes.
5. **Vegetation Consent Record Form (CSR):** collects data and provides a standard record of landowner engagement and consent or non-agreement.
6. **Integrated Pest Management Plan 2025-2030 for Poles, Facilities and Utility Corridors:** is maintained as an internal operational document that establishes minimum standards for compliance with the BC Integrated Pest Management Act and Regulation.

### DEFINITIONS

**Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM):** is a system of managing vegetation in and around electric utility infrastructure in which compatible (permissible) and non-compatible (invasive) vegetation are identified, actions considered, controls are evaluated and implemented to achieve safety and reliability objectives. IVM is also a guideline for managing pest populations to include physical, cultural, behavioural, mechanical, chemical and biological treatment types as well as the tools, techniques of application, safety and reporting. It also integrates public consultation into the planning and development of IVM plans and prescriptions within the Nelson

Hydro service territory that governs all staff, consultants and contractors tasked to perform vegetation and pest management.

**Nelson Hydro:** is a City of Nelson-owned and operated utility and is the local supply authority for electrical service in the City of Nelson and the surrounding area.

**Utility Corridor:** is a general term used to describe specific legal land situations; Nelson Hydro has a permit from the Ministry of Transport or the City of Nelson to maintain and install its own equipment on their land for the safe operation of the electric system; Nelson Hydro has a Statutory Right of Way with a private owner on a fee simple land title to access and maintain its own equipment for the safe operation of the electric system; and finally, Nelson Hydro has Right-of-Way over crown or private land to maintain and install its own equipment for the safe operation of the electric system.

**Service Territory:** The Nelson Hydro service area covers from the Nelson Hydro Power Plant on Kootenay River to the west, Blewett, Taghum, Sproule and Grohman Creek, the City of Nelson, Highway 6 south towards Salmo to Perrier Road and beyond, north and east along Kootenay Lake to Harrop - Procter, Balfour, Queens Bay and terminating at Coffee Creek north of Queens Bay along Kootenay Lake.

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Nelson Hydro operates within the regulatory frameworks of the City of Nelson, the Province of British Columbia, and the Government of Canada, and strives to balance regulatory compliance with progressive vegetation management practices.

Nelson Hydro will comply with the BC Integrated Pest Management Act and Regulation using certified contractors and contractor-held Pest Management Plan authorizations for pesticide use, as applicable. These may include Notice of the Intent to Treat, Pesticide Use Notices, contractor-held certifications and training, and other permitted approaches.

This Policy is framed by:

1. *City of Nelson Municipal Tree Bylaw (No. 3232, 2012)* states in Section 3.1a that pruning or removal of trees required for safe clearances from high voltage electric lines are exempt from the bylaw.
2. *City of Nelson Pesticide Regulation Bylaw (No. 3081)* states in Section 6 Utility Corridors that an utility operator may use pesticide on a utility corridor or highway right-of-way providing the pesticide is applied by a licensed applicator, and, it is not applied within two metres of a property line, within 5 metres of a bus stop, school yard, licensed daycare facility, senior facility, hospital, medical clinic, playground or park.
3. *BC Integrated Pest Management Act and Integrated Pest Management Regulation* (IPMA and IPMR) govern licensing and certification, permits and notifications, public consultation, use standards, storage and disposal, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements for pest management activities.
4. *Pest Control Products Act (Canada) and Regulations (PMRA)* state that only registered products may be used and label directions are legally binding, including the rates, methods, personal protective equipment, re-entry intervals, buffers, drift mitigation, storage, disposal for controlling pests.
5. *WorkSafeBC* provides regulations for worker safety including instructions for pesticide safe work practices, hazard controls, personal protective equipment, and spills integrated into pre-work briefings for staff and contractors.

6. *Migratory Birds Convention Act and the BC Wildlife Act* prohibit harming migratory birds, their eggs, and active nests; some reuse nests (e.g., great blue heron, pileated woodpecker) have year-round protections.
7. *Riparian Areas Protection Act and Regulation (RAPA and RAPR)* ensure environmental assessment and streamside protection in areas where vegetation management work is performed.
8. *Health Canada* regulates and approves pesticide products and establishes requirements for their safe use.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

**General Manager:** Accountable for the Policy and ensuring organizational compliance; is an escalation point in customer disputes per the Public Engagement Framework.

**Manager Operations & Lines:** Ensures compliance with all applicable legislation within the regulatory framework; oversees integrated vegetation management execution; maintains and updates all plans and documents governed by this Policy.

## NH Staff and Contractors

- Maintain professional licences, permits, and certifications.
- Follow engagement framework; prepare notices; manage Consent Record Forms; and maintain public consultation/engagement records.
- Develop prescriptions; lead nest and sensitive site surveys; set buffers/timing; validate stop work and re start conditions; follow riparian regulations when applicable.
- Execute work as per prescriptions, best management practices, product labels, and safety plans. And document deviations as applicable.
- Complete all reports and paperwork including annual use reports.
- Ensure that any pesticide use is conducted in accordance with applicable authorization mechanisms and regulatory requirements.

## PRINCIPLES

- **Non-Chemical Priority:** Nelson Hydro prioritizes manual and mechanical vegetation control methods—mowing, trimming, cutting, brushing, and pruning—as the first and preferred means of managing vegetation within all publicly accessible Utility Corridors.
- **No Widespread Application:** Nelson Hydro does not undertake broadcast, blanket, or aerial pesticide applications in publicly accessible Utility Corridors.
- **Targeted Chemical Use (Last Resort):** Chemical treatment may only be used where:
  - Non-chemical methods are not feasible or effective;
  - There is a demonstrable risk to public safety, worker safety, or system reliability; and
  - The selected method minimizes environmental and public exposure.

Any chemical use must be precise and localized (e.g., cut surface/cut stump, paste/gel, basal, wand/wick wipe), minimize total product usage, and prevent off-target impacts.
- **Setting Specific Methods:** Nelson Hydro distinguishes between fenced, controlled access substations/generation facilities and publicly accessible Utility Corridors. Substations may permit broader vegetation tools (including limited chemical control for groundcover suppression, fire risk reduction, and infrastructure protection) under PMP/IPM compliance; public Utility Corridors remain non-chemical first, with only last resort targeted chemical use.

- **Enhanced Public Engagement:** Nelson Hydro will implement public engagement and notification that meets or exceeds local benchmarks and aligns with the Public Engagement Framework within the tools, technology, and budget available to the utility.
- **GIS & Data Improvement:** Nelson Hydro will use its Geographic Information System (GIS) and mobile data collection (e.g., additional layers for hazard trees, invasive species, riparian, slope/soil sensitivity, wildlife features) to better support IVM planning, prescriptions, monitoring, and public communication.
- **Monitoring & Transparency:** Nelson Hydro will track vegetation management activities, including any pesticide use, and maintain records in accordance with legislation. Summary information may be made available to the public where appropriate.
- **Safety and Reliability Override:** Notwithstanding the above principles, Nelson Hydro may take immediate action, including the use of chemical control methods, where required to address imminent risks to public safety, infrastructure, or electrical reliability, in compliance with applicable legislation.

## PROCEDURE

1. Use the principles outlined in this Policy to guide decision-making and to plan and perform all vegetation and pest management activities described in the supporting documents.
2. Follow applicable consultation and engagement procedures with First Nations in accordance with current standards and requirements.
3. Follow public engagement protocols as outlined in the Public Engagement Framework.