

## Vegetation Clearance Permit

Vegetation clearance, particularly during enabling works, can be high environmental risk on our construction sites. This Environmental Alert explains the requirements of the MWHT Vegetation Clearance Permit and why it is required.

It is essential that environmental risk is assessed for any vegetation or tree clearance. Failure to comply may cause environmental harm, legal breaches and project delays.

### Why is a Vegetation Clearance Permit required?

**Prior to any Vegetation Removal / Working on Trees, a Vegetation Clearance Permit (EVFR05-14) must be completed. This MUST be approved by the project Environmental Advisor / Manager.**

### Why is a Vegetation Clearance Permit required?

We need to ensure that all environmental risks have been addressed prior to clearing any vegetation. During 2025, MWHT had a major environmental incident regarding damage and potential harm to a protected species, and several significant near misses. This included:

- Site laydown area established within a wildlife exclusion zone resulting in disturbance to a badger sett and potential harm to badgers. The ecology reports were completed but the Wildlife Exclusion Area was not demarcated on site prior to the vegetation removal. Due to the seriousness of the situation, MWH shutdown work on the site and self-reported the incident to the authorities. The Police attended site and investigated the matter. MWHT were required to provide reinstatement information and demonstrate that the subsequent reinstatement works were performed under a Badger Licence.
- Removal of 30 – 40 metres of vegetation removed alongside riverbank, without an ecology survey. Potential risk to nesting birds, protected species and whether invasive non-native plants were present (e.g. Himalayan balsam).
- Design change resulting in pipework being relocated into a wooded area not covered by the ecology survey and in a tree Root Protection Area. Works were stopped during an audit before any harm was caused.
- An addition to a project scope required urgent vegetation removal. Works were stopped prior to commencing as ecology requirements had not been properly considered; presence of badgers, Himalayan Balsam and location of trees and mitigation measures were not in place. No harm was caused and works went ahead once a Vegetation Clearance Permit was in place with an ecological watching brief.

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### Does the Vegetation / Tree(s) need to be removed?

Can the work be relocated to prevent / reduce the need for vegetation clearance?  
 Has an ecology survey(s) been undertaken and does it identify high risk areas?  
 Have other options / locations been discussed with the design team?

### How to complete a Vegetation Clearance Permit?

#### Responsibilities:

- Completed by a member of the Site/Project Team with knowledge of the project scope of works, site environmental risks and the mitigation measures required. The Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and Environmental Constraints Map MUST be reviewed. Refer to guidance on completing the Permit ([EVGD05-24](#)).
- Prior to commencing works, sign off is required by an Environmental Manager / Advisor to ensure all environmental measures have been considered.
- Sign off required by individual supervising the vegetation removal activities.
- All personnel involved in the work must sign the permit.

#### Vegetation Clearance Permit must contain:



Site Location and Area of Clearance Works (include drawing/map showing area)



Details of Clearance Works to be carried out including plant / equipment to be used



Ecology considerations:

- Exclusion zones
- Ecologist surveys
- Mitigation measures



Details of any Supervision requirements e.g. by an ecologist / arboriculturist

#### Key documentation required prior to commencing:

- Ecology Surveys
- Protected Species Licence (where appropriate)
- Tree Protection Plan / Impact Assessment
- Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Management Plan
- EMP and ECP
- SSOW / RAMS

#### Briefing on the RAMS and Vegetation Clearance Permit

required prior to commencing. To complete Toolbox Talk – the following are available:

- [EVTT01-60 Vegetation Clearance Toolbox Talk.pdf](#)
- [EVTT01-60 - Video - Toolbox Talk Vegetation Clearance.mp4](#)

