

Environmental Standard Operating Procedure (ESOP)	
Vegetation Maintenance and Removal (VMR)	
Environmental Affairs (EA): Conservation (760) 830-5719, 830-7896, 830-5720	Revised: 1 October 2024

Subject: VEGETATION MAINTENANCE AND REMOVAL

References: (a) ESOP for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation
 (b) ESOP for Soil Excavation and Grading
 (c) ESOP for Solid Waste Collection and Transportation
 (d) Combat Center Order (CCO) 5090.1J, Environmental Protection

Enclosure: (1) Record of Nest Check

1. Purpose. This document provides environmental protection procedures for vegetation maintenance and stump removal.
2. Application. These procedures apply to any individual trimming or removing trees, shrubs, non-turf grasses, and stumps (collectively referred to as "vegetation"), whether the vegetation is living, downed, or dead, aboard the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center.
3. Procedures. Personnel trimming or removing vegetation will confirm that their actions do not negatively impact natural resources without written authorization.
4. Operational Controls.
 - a. Before starting work, confirm compliance with the ESOP for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation.
 - b. Trim or remove vegetation.
 - (1) Cutting or harvesting any vegetation in the range training areas is prohibited at all times unless given specific and prior written authorization from the EA.
 - (2) Trimming or removing vegetation from Mainside from 1 Feb through 30 Sep requires a nest check by authorized personnel (4.c.) before the start of work.
 - (3) The person conducting the nest check will provide a completed Record of Nest Check to both the requesting organization and to EA Conservation and include documentation on the proposed work is clear and ready to proceed.
 - (4) Trimming or removing of vegetation will occur within 48 hours after the nest check. If work lasts longer than 2 weeks, a second nest

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check of the remaining work area will be performed and reported by authorized personnel (refer to 4.c.).

- (5) Trimming or removing vegetation in Mainside from 1 Oct through 31 Jan does not require a nest check.
- (6) Tree, shrub, and bush trimmings must be removed and disposed within 48 hours after trimming.
- (7) Additional requirements for stump removal include the following:
 - (A) Contact the Public Works Division to obtain a dig permit, as applicable. Confirm permit requirements are met.
 - (B) Confirm compliance with reference (b), the ESOP for Soil Excavation and Grading.

c. Personnel authorized to conduct nest checks are as follows:

- (1) Natural resources staff within EA are authorized to conduct nest checks. Contact EA Conservation at least 2 business days before starting work to arrange for EA personnel to perform these checks.
 - (2) EA encourages organizations with regular vegetation maintenance duties to obtain authorization for their personnel to conduct nest checks. Personnel eligible to receive authorization will have operational control over the work being performed and at least 3 years of vegetation maintenance experience (such as being a groundskeeping crew lead). Contact EA Conservation to obtain this authorization.
- d. Contact EA Conservation if birds, bird parts, nests, or eggs are found in any plant material that has been removed manually or naturally. Bird materials are protected by law and may be handled only by authorized personnel.
 - e. Dispose of green waste in accordance with the most current procedures for solid waste collection and transportation (refer to the ESOP for Solid Waste Collection and Transportation).
 - f. Contact EA Conservation regarding specific situations or other concerns not addressed by this procedure.

5. Documentation and Record Keeping.

- a. The person conducting the nest check will provide a copy of the completed Record of Nest Check to EA Conservation, who will maintain that record.
- b. Vegetation maintenance crews will maintain, at the worksite, a copy of the completed Record of Nest Check while conducting any work covered by this ESOP.
- c. EA Conservation will maintain records of any personnel, other than natural resources staff, that have been authorized to conduct nest checks.

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6. Training. Affected personnel must be trained in this document.
7. Emergency Preparedness and Response Procedures. Refer to CCO 5090.1J.
8. Inspection and Corrective Action. The Environmental Compliance Coordinator (ECC) will confirm unit adherence to this ESOP. The ECC will confirm that the unit personnel are trained in this ESOP and maintain appropriate documentation in accordance with this ESOP.

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Record of Nest Check

Person Checking:

Date Checked:

Location of Nest Check:

(Provide location information and describe the vegetation checked sufficiently that work crews can understand what vegetation is cleared for work.)

The nest check determined: (choose one)

☐ No nests present; work may proceed.

☐ One or more nests present.

If nests were present: (choose one)

☐ EA Conservation destroyed the inactive nest. Work may proceed.

☐ EA Conservation removed the active nest. Work may proceed.

☐ EA Conservation flagged and left the active nest in place. Work may not disturb the nest, but otherwise may proceed.

I personally performed the nest check described above and certify these statements are accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: