

Environmental Standard Operating Procedures (ESOP)	
Vegetation Maintenance and Removal (VMR)	
Environmental Affairs (EA): Conservation (760) 830-5720	Revised: 1 October 2023

Subj: VEGETATION MAINTENANCE AND REMOVAL

Ref: (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) CCO 5090.1, Environmental Protection

Encl: (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 "vegetation"), whether the vegetation is living, downed, or dead, aboard the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (Combat Center).

3. Procedures. Personnel trimming or removing vegetation shall ensure their actions do not negatively impact natural resources without written prior authorization.

4. Operational Controls.

a. Prior to starting work ensure compliance with reference (a), the ESOP for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Documentation.

b. Trimming or Removing Vegetation.

1) Cutting or harvesting any vegetation in the range training areas is prohibited at all times unless provided specific, prior written authorization from EA.

2) Trimming or removing vegetation from Mainside from 1 Feb through 30 Sep requires a nest check by authorized personnel (4.c.) prior to the start of work.

3) The person conducting the nest check shall provide a completed Record of Nest Check to both the requesting organization and to EA Conservation and include documentation the proposed work is clear to proceed.

4) Trimming or removing of vegetation shall occur within two weeks of the nest check. If work lasts longer than two weeks a second nest check of the remaining work area shall be performed and reported by authorized personnel (see 4.c. below).

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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 of trimming.

7) Additional Requirements for Stump Removal.

a) Contact the Public Works Division (PWD) to obtain a dig permit, as applicable. Ensure all permit requirements are met.

b) Ensure compliance with reference (b), the ESOP for Soil Excavation/Grading.

c. Personnel Authorized to Conduct Nest Checks.

1) Natural resources staff within EA are authorized to conduct nest checks. Contact EA Conservation at least two business days prior to 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 shall have operational control over the work being performed and at least three years of vegetation maintenance experience (e.g., 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 (reference c).

f. Contact EA Conservation at (760)830-5720 regarding specific situations or other concerns not addressed by this procedure.

5. Documentation and Record Keeping.

a. The person conducting the nest check shall provide a copy of the completed Record of Nest Check to EA Conservation, who shall maintain that record.

b. Vegetation maintenance crews shall maintain at the worksite a copy of the completed Record of Nest Check while conducting any work covered by this ESOP.

c. EA Conservation shall maintain records of any personnel other than natural resources staff that have been authorized to conduct nest checks.

6. Training. All affected personnel must be trained in this document.

7. Emergency Preparedness and Response Procedures. Refer to reference (d).

**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:**