

Adopted July 10, 2024

Standard Operating Procedures for Overgrown Vegetation Management

Town building regulations require that vegetation installed by Town residents on public and private property be maintained so as not to interfere with pedestrian or vehicular access and/or visibility necessary for public safety.

Town of Chevy Chase Maintenance Standards:

In order to enforce these regulations equitably, the Town has adopted the following clearance standards for sidewalks and streets.

- All sidewalks must meet ADA standards for accessible pathways (at least 36 inches of clear unobstructed passage for a height of 80 inches).
- All streets must have a minimum vertical clearance of 14 feet from curb edge to curb edge.

In addition, the Town may require pruning or removal of private vegetation on public or private property to eliminate obstructions to pedestrian or motorist visibility.

Enforcement:

Clearance for Access

When the Town observes that private vegetation overhangs a sidewalk or street in violation of the standards listed above, the Town will deliver a notice to the property owner advising of the required clearance standard. The notice will advise that the Town will prune the vegetation if the plantings are not brought into compliance by the homeowner within 30 days.

A second notice advising of the pruning work will be delivered to the home at least 10 days before trimming/clearance work is done by the Town.

The required clearance will be achieved by trimming private vegetation, if any, on the street side of the sidewalk first and then trimming private vegetation on the property side of the sidewalk.

Clearance for Visibility

When the Town observes or receives complaints about vegetation at intersections that may interfere with pedestrian and motorist visibility, but does not interfere with access, staff may commission a traffic engineering firm to perform a visibility study.

If the Town determines that corrective action is needed, the Town will deliver a notice and a copy of the report, if any, to the property owner advising of the violation.

- If the offending vegetation is located within the public right-of-way, the notice will advise that the Town will prune the vegetation if the plantings are not brought into compliance by the homeowner within 10 to 30 days, as determined by the Town

Manager. The Town will schedule the trimming/pruning work and will post a notice advising of the upcoming clearance work at least 7 days in advance of the scheduled date. The cost of any corrective action taken by the Town may be assessed against the property owner.

- If the offending vegetation is on private property, and except in the case of an emergency, the notice will advise that the Town will issue a formal Notice of Violation if corrective pruning work is not done within 10 to 30 days, as determined by the Town Manager. The Notice of Violation will give an additional 15 days for corrective pruning to be done. If the issue persists following the Notice of Violation, the Town will issue a citation with an abatement order. Fines may be imposed, and any cost of any corrective action taken by the Town may be assessed against the property owner.