

## **Section 6.22 Best Management Practices for Installation of New Overhead Utility Lines**

Pursuant to Section 6.22 of the Vermont wetland rules, the following best management practices have been developed for this allowed use in order to prevent discharges to Waters of the State, and to maintain the integrity of wetlands and associated waters:

**6.22 The installation of a new overhead utility line that does not involve extensive tree clearing, with three poles or fewer in the wetland or buffer zone, in compliance with Best Management Practices developed by the Secretary**

Please read this document carefully in order to determine whether your activity qualifies as an allowed use, to perform the activity in compliance with the best management practices, and to determine if other permits may be necessary.

1. Does the proposed activity qualify for an Allowed Use under Section 6 of the Vermont Wetland Rules?
  - a. This use shall not alter the configuration of the wetland's outlet or the flow of water into or out of the wetland, and no draining, dredging, or grading shall occur.
  - b. The placement, maintenance or removal of the structure shall not result in discharge to Waters of the State;
  - c. No permanent or temporary fill will be placed in the wetland or buffer zone with the exception of poles. Extensive removal of woody vegetation outside the right-of-way, construction of new roads or improvement of existing roads may require a permit from the Vermont Wetlands Program.
  - d. "Extensive Tree Clearing" shall mean all tree clearing in the wetland and buffer zone that exceeds 250 square feet.
2. Best Management Practices
  - a. All impacts to wetlands and buffer zones shall be avoided and minimized to the greatest extent practicable;
  - b. Where existing maintenance plan is in place that is more protective of wetland resources, or has been approved by the Secretary, it may supersede these BMPs.
  - c. Associated wires will result in only minimal clearing of vegetation (250 square feet or less).
  - d. Poles are located in such a way as to minimize the clearing of vegetation in the wetland and buffer zone to the greatest extent practicable, and impacts further minimized by the following:
    - i. Vegetation is managed in a manner that only trees and saplings that have the potential to reach a height that interferes with the utility line are removed;
    - ii. Vegetation should be cut at ground level, leaving root systems intact.
    - iii. If cutting wetland vegetation cannot be avoided, complete the work by hand (chain or hand saw) instead of using large equipment.
  - e. Impacts from access shall be limited by utilizing existing or low impact routes using the following sequence of options in order of preference:
    - i. Access should be limited to upland areas or existing maintained roads to the greatest extent practicable.

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- ii. Access on other existing primitive roads in wetlands or buffer zone.
- iii. Where existing roads are not an option for access, minimize rutting or earth disturbing activities by:
  - (1) Accessing wetland areas under frozen or dry conditions. Use mats where necessary to avoid rutting;
  - (2) Memorializing the limits of disturbance using a combination silt fence, flagging, and/or snow fence;
  - (3) Use of low-ground pressure or track vehicles in wetlands to minimize compaction and rutting;
  - (4) Minimizing equipment use in the wetland and limiting vehicle trips; and,
  - (5) Restoring the project site in order to reverse soil compaction, stabilize the soil on the site and replant the site if vegetation has been destroyed.
- f. Appropriate steps are taken to prevent the transport of sediment into any wetland or waterway and to promote revegetate following the completion of work. Utilize other recommended sediment and erosion controls as needed and described in the ANR Low Risk Handbook or other appropriate controls.
- g. Invasive species should be prevented using the following methods:
  - i. The equipment should be cleaned so as to contain no observable soil or vegetation prior to work in wetlands and buffer zones to prevent the spread of invasive species;
  - ii. If removed material contains invasive species, care should be taken to dispose of the material in a manner that does not spread the invasive species to new areas.
- 3. Other Permit Considerations:
  - a. Structures in or spanning wetlands, streams and lakes may be subject to additional state, local and federal regulations.