

Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP)

A Guide for Lakeshore Roads

The MRGP only applies to municipal roads.

Private roads and driveways are exempt.

There are six exemptions that protect environmental and historic resources.



Trees and shrubs along roads within 250 feet of a lake should not be cut and roads should not be widened toward the lake side.

This existing vegetation is essential for protecting the integrity of the road while stabilizing the shoreland bank.



Act 64 and Town Roads

Act 64, set into law in 2016, is also known as Vermont's Clean Water Act. This Act is referred to as the "all-in" approach to water quality, meaning all Vermonters have a role in protecting Vermont surface waters.

Vermont roadways are responsible for about **10% of sediment and phosphorus sources to surface waters**, and municipal roads make up 70% of 118,777 total miles of roads in Vermont. To help reduce road runoff and protect surface waters, Act 64 mandates all hydrologically connected roads (class one through four) be maintained according to new road drainage standards. The MRGP outlines the standards for town roads, while the TS4 Permit explains the standards for state roads.



Road Crews Install Best Management Practices to Meet MRGP Standards

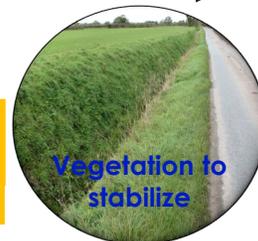
Best Management Practices (BMPs) include:

- ◆ Enabling water to flow like a "sheet" off the road, avoiding concentrated erosive flow, by building up the crown—the high point in the middle of the road—to distribute flow to both sides of the road
- ◆ Increasing the size of road culverts where erosion occurs (generally, to 18-inches in diameter) to reduce clogging
- ◆ Stabilizing ditches either with stone ($\geq 8\%$ slope) or vegetation to prevent soils from eroding
- ◆ Removal of road side berms that prevents water from leaving the road, also by lowering the built up shoulders, ditching may be avoided with improved sheet flow



If $\leq 8\%$ Slope

If $\geq 8\%$ Slope



Important Exemptions

Do NOT impact in Order to Meet the Standards

- ◆ ***Vegetation within 250ft of a Lakeshore**
- ◆ Historic Stone Walls
- ◆ Historic Structures
- ◆ Historic Landscapes
- ◆ Buried Utilities
- ◆ Excessive Hydraulic Hammering of Ledge

***Road crews should not be cutting down trees, shrubs and mixed vegetation within 250ft of a lakeshore, which does not include mowing grass or clearing noxious weeds. This vegetation is protected under the Vermont Shoreland Protection Act, and serves as best management to stabilize the bank and protect the integrity of the road.**

What Should I Do on my Private Road or Driveway?

The MRGP only applies to municipal rights-of-way and does not include private roads or driveways. However, there are practices that landowners should follow on their own private roadways to prevent sediment and nutrient runoff to the lake.

- ◆ Choose a contractor that is Certified through the Vermont Natural Shoreland Erosion Control Certification Program. The Vermont [Lakes and Ponds web site](#) explains more about this annual November Certification training with the exact dates and locations.
- ◆ Walk private roads and agree with your neighbors on the best areas to install turnouts or sites for road runoff, like vegetative treatment areas.
- ◆ When grading a gravel drive, build a crown to ensure that water effectively flows like a "sheet" off the road.
- ◆ Do not widen roads or driveways to avoid increasing impervious surfaces.
- ◆ For steep driveways, stabilize the soil in the ditch. Larger, blocky stone in steep ditches prevents erosion by reducing water velocity.



NSECC courses offered in November



What Should I Expect From My Town Road Crew?



You may see your town road crew or others helping your town with these three steps:

1. Inventory

All hydrologically connected road segments, ones that drain into a stream, river, or lake, will be identified. The [Agency of Natural Resources Atlas](#) shows this road layer by clicking on the municipal roads theme layer.

2. Prioritize

Towns analyze the road erosion *Inventory* to prioritize road projects based on the highest potential impact to water quality. "Very High Priority" road issues must be brought up to the MRGP standards by 2025, other roads by 2037.

3. Implement

Road crews respond by implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect water quality. VTRANS and the Agency of Natural Resources provide funding for many projects. **You can help by reminding your town of the EXEMPTIONS!**

If you see your town widening roads towards the lakeside and/or cutting vegetation along the shoreland, PLEASE remind the town that this vegetation serves as an important buffer, offering bank stability and filtration, protecting both lake and road, and should NOT be cut!



Thank you Windham Regional Commission for help with this handout

For more information about the MRGP visit:

<http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/stormwater/permit-information-applications-fees/municipal-roads-program>

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources ~ Lakes & Ponds Section ~ Lake Wise Program ~ <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed>