



Annual Vegetation Management Program

FAQ'S

Where can I get more information about CN's vegetation management program?

For more details about CN's Annual Vegetation Management Program, please visit our website at www.cn.ca/vegetation

Why does CN need to remove vegetation along its train tracks annually?

Safety at CN is one of our most important core values, and part of maintaining and operating a safe railway is ensuring vegetation is managed along our corridor. CN also has an obligation, pursuant to the *Rules Respecting Track Safety*, adopted under the *Railway Safety Act*, to ensure that vegetation on or immediately adjacent to the railway roadbed is controlled. More specifically, the Rules require federal railways to ensure the track is free of vegetation that could create fire hazards, affect the track integrity or obstruct visibility of operations and inspections. Separate regulations also require removal of vegetation to ensure every grade crossing meets sightline requirements.

Where does CN remove vegetation?

Please note that for the management of vegetation, CN divides its corridor into two components: the ballast and the right of way. The ballast section (graveled area) covers a 16ft width (4.9m). The right of way section covers a 42ft width (13m) on each side of the ballast (graveled area).



Vegetation in the right of way section needs to be controlled to protect sight lines for train crews to see signal systems and at road crossings, prevent trees from fouling the track during storms, reduce fuel loading to prevent fires, minimize wildlife mortality, ensure



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good drainage along ditches and culverts, amongst other safety requirements and is primarily controlled mechanically, through mowing and cutting of vegetation. Certain herbicide products are used (excluding glyphosate) to encourage grasses and small plants rather than shrubs and trees.

The ballast section, on the other hand, is the most critical area as it supports the track infrastructure which supports the movement of freight and passengers; this section also provides an area for train crew to safely inspect their train. Given the crucial role it plays in ensuring the safety and integrity of rail operations, this section must be devoid of all vegetation. The only proven way to effectively remove vegetation in the ballast section is through chemical application.



How will you manage dry plants and herbs left once the spraying is complete?

Ensuring vegetation is controlled on an annual basis is the best method to reduce larger volumes of dead and dry plants. This is because it kills plants when they are smaller which reduces the amount and volume of dead plant material. CN's 2019 program has been developed specifically with this in mind. Most plants, once dead, will naturally decay leaving little debris. As for the right of way, the herbicides used are selective and the grass cover will remain intact while any broadleaved species or noxious weeds will be controlled.

Will you be using Glyphosate. If so, is it dangerous for us or my pets ?

All pesticides used in Canada must be registered by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and CN only uses pesticides that have been approved for use in Canada and in the Province within which they are applied. Protection of human health and the environment is Health Canada's primary



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objective in the regulation of pesticides and all pesticides must undergo rigorous science-based assessments before being approved for sale in Canada. The PMRA also re-evaluates registered pesticides on a cyclical basis to ensure they continue to meet modern health and environmental standards. In this regard, the PMRA re-evaluated glyphosate in 2017 and reaffirmed its conclusions that products containing glyphosate do not present risks of concern to human health or the environment when used in accordance with revised label directions. CN's vegetation control contractor uses glyphosate in accordance with label directions.

Has CN tried any non-chemical weed control options in the past, such as weed whacking? Have they worked?

CN has used weed cutting in the past to control vegetation, but this does not remove the roots, and actually encourages more growth, therefore it is not an effective long-term solution for vegetation removal along railway tracks. The application of steam injection has also been investigated; however they have proven ineffective in killing the roots, which could compromise the integrity of the rail bed.

CN has also explored other options, such as high concentrate vinegar (acetic acid), however this was deemed not a viable option as the acid reacts negatively with steel and the sensitive electronic monitoring equipment used to regulate safe movement and operation of trains.

I am an organic farmer adjacent to your tracks, should I be worried?

Most of the vegetation control focuses on the ballast section (graveled area) which is 16ft (4.9 meters) wide, leaving about 13 meters of right of way on each side of the ballast. The equipment used for application is a shrouded boom which focuses the spray downward to reduce potential drift. Application must also be done during appropriate weather conditions, including low wind levels.

Can I request my area not be sprayed?

Safety is of utmost importance to CN and vegetation control is a key component of keeping our employees and the communities in which we operate safe. Ensuring vegetation is kept clear of our infrastructure, signals, road crossing sight lines and enabling our teams to inspect and maintain the track is critically important. As a result, we cannot choose to have a reduced safety management process in some areas and so all areas of the CN ballast section must be treated to control vegetation.