

# Lake Emma Township

P.O. Box 92 Park Rapids, MN 56470

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## BRUSH CLEARING AND TREE TRIMMING POLICY

The township board wishes to minimize the impact on the environment but also takes seriously its responsibility to public safety. The township has used Minnesota Association of Townships document Number: TR60000 as guidance in creation of this policy.

**Who:** Clearing of Lake Emma Township roads ditches are completed by a contractor retained by the township.

**How:** Brush and tree limbs are cut to a reasonable width beyond the road surface by use of a grinding machine (the intent of the grinding machine is to reduce trimmings to chips that can be mowed by an industrial ditch mower and will decay over time). The intent is to not cause long-term damage to the tree. The road surface is then cleared of major debris at the end of each day's trimming. Some stumps and limbs are cut with saws after machine grinding. The wood chips and limbs are left in the ditch and are processed further by the summer mowings. Generally, the cuts gray over within six to twelve months.

**What:** Brush and tree limbs are cleared from Township roads to width of right-of-way or to a reasonable extent. Lake Emma Township has a wide mix of right-of-way widths and many locations where the right-of-way is dedicated by to the township by plat. Trees larger than 6 inches in diameter measured two feet above ground are left in place unless negotiated with the adjacent landowner.

**When:** Trees are trimmed on an as-needed basis based on review by the Township Board during the annual road review, reports from the Maintenance Contractor and information provided by other sources. The trimming generally occurs on an every four-year basis (or as needed due to different vegetation growth rates). Limbs are generally trimmed back to the tree trunk to allow for several growth years before retrimming again. The Contractor provides advanced notice and obtains permission from the board prior to completing a road section. This notice is noted in the Township minutes under the Road Report. This notice services as notification to landowners that tree trimming will be completed.

**Where:** All township roads in Lake Emma Township (total road miles 33 miles)

**Why:** The ditches are cleared of brush and trees for the following reasons:

- Improve site lines for vehicles as they travel the road (Safety)
  - Prevent or minimize car hit deer or other wildlife
  - Allow for improved sight lines to see other drivers
  - Allow for improved sight lines to see pedestrians, bike riders etc.
  - Minimize danger from recently fallen tree debris on the road surface
  
- Allow space needed for larger vehicles including but not limited to the following:
  - Snowplows
  - Graders
  - Road Construction equipment
  - Propane Trucks
  - Emergency vehicles (Fire Trucks and Ambulance)
  - Delivery Trucks
  - Home construction vehicles (dump trucks, lumber yard delivery trucks, cement trucks, etc.)
  
- E911 sign visibility to allow for quick identification for emergency response (Safety)
  
- Snow storage (this is needed for years when the township receives excessive amounts of snow)