



Maintenance of areas outside school grounds procedure

Version: 1.1 | Version effective: 23/03/2023

Audience

All state schools

Purpose

To outline the process to be followed when schools officers are required to undertake maintenance work outside school grounds.

Overview

In circumstances where areas outside the school grounds (e.g. set down areas, footpaths, park areas) need to be maintained, the following will occur:

- liaison with the local council concerning the council's own maintenance of areas outside of the school grounds which affect school activities
- risk assessment and safety procedures are complied with prior to and during maintenance work
- schools officers receive requests for maintenance work and associated information in writing.

Responsibilities

Schools officers

- Undertake maintenance work as requested by the principal.
- Participate in conducting risk assessments or risk assessment reviews before undertaking maintenance work.
- Ensure required risk assessment safety controls are implemented and any standard operating procedures are complied with.
- Advise the principal of any identified hazards, or if the job is, or appears to be unsafe.
- Advise the principal if identified controls (e.g. equipment, PPE) are not available or require repair.

- Record health, safety and wellbeing incidents in accordance with the [Health, safety and wellbeing incident management procedure](#) and verbally report safety incidents to the supervisor as soon as practicable but no later than the end of the day or shift.
- Be familiar with the [Queensland Government indemnity guideline](#).

Principal (or nominated officer)

- Liaise with the local council regarding council maintenance programs for set down areas and footpaths beyond the school grounds, and ensure that accurate records are kept regarding these programs.
- Identify maintenance work necessary to ensure areas outside the school grounds are maintained appropriately.
- Conduct risk assessments prior to maintenance work being undertaken with the participation of the schools officer and any other relevant persons.
- Ensure risk assessments and any standard operating procedures remain current.
- Provide written requests to schools officers for any maintenance work.
- Ensure availability of, and require the use of identified safety controls when completing maintenance work.
- Ensure appropriate registration for motorised vehicles used during maintenance work.
- Be familiar with the [Queensland Government indemnity guideline](#).

Process

1. Liaise with local council and seek necessary approvals

Principal (or nominated officer) is to:

- liaise with the local council regarding council maintenance programs for areas outside the schools grounds and:
 - negotiate a maintenance timetable with the local council, ensuring that as part of the council program, footpaths and set down areas outside the school perimeter are mowed and cleared prior to the commencement of each school term
 - keep a record of any information, arrangement or timetable regarding council maintenance
 - inform the schools officer of any council maintenance information, arrangement or timetable agreed with the council.
- obtain approval from the council prior to commencement of maintenance work on council land that may change the condition of the land. For example, this could include the school's use of council land for sports carnivals, such as setting up for a carnival or line-marking on the land.

Note: General maintenance work on council land outside of school property such as the removal of debris, mowing, whipper snipping, and other work that does not change the condition of the land, does not generally require council approval.
- ensure conditional registration for motorised vehicles used in maintenance work is obtained from the Department of Transport and Main Roads as required (e.g. tractors, ride on lawn mowers, slashers etc.). This does not include push mowers and brush cutters.

2. Identify maintenance work required and complete risk assessment

- Principal (or their nominated officer) is to identify the maintenance work to be carried out, ensuring that a risk assessment is conducted in consultation with the schools officer. Additional relevant persons, such as workplace health and safety advisors (HSA) or regional support may be consulted during this process.
- The risk assessment must be carried out prior to the first time the activity is conducted and reviewed prior to each subsequent request for the maintenance work to ensure there has been no change to the circumstances and that the control measures remain suitable and effective.
- A [risk assessment – maintenance of areas outside the school grounds](#) template is available as a minimum risk assessment standard and it is recommended that it be used. However, an alternative template may be used that includes the same elements.
- The following, as a minimum, are to be taken into consideration when conducting risk assessments:
 - the location and condition of the areas to be maintained, ensuring the visibility to others of the schools officer while they undertake the maintenance work
 - the timing of the maintenance work to avoid peaks in vehicular and pedestrian traffic
 - other associated activities or interactions (e.g. level of student traffic, cyclists, vehicle movement)
 - the appropriateness of the equipment for the maintenance work, and the investigation of options to control identified risks, and
 - environmental conditions.
- For tasks that are carried out regularly, a local standard operating procedure (SOP) may be developed (if appropriate), and reviewed prior to each time the task is undertaken.

3. Provide a written request to the schools officer to undertake the maintenance work

On completion of the risk assessment, the principal provides a [written request](#) to the schools officer to undertake the maintenance work required. The request is to include the following details:

- a description of the maintenance work required
- a description of the area and location where the maintenance work is to be undertaken
- a reason for the maintenance work (e.g. to provide safe access and egress between local council service).

Copies of the following documents are to be attached to the letter:

- the risk assessment including identified controls, and
- the [Queensland Government indemnity guideline](#).

The principal is to retain a copy of the letter and the risk assessment at the school.

The principal is to ensure that identified safety controls are available to the schools officer prior to commencement of work.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Conditional registration	Conditional registration is registration for non-standard vehicles that do not comply with the standard regulations for registration and which have a genuine need for limited access to the road network.
Maintenance work	Any work that could be undertaken by a schools officer to maintain grounds outside the school as required. This may include, but is not limited to mowing, removal of debris, setting up sporting carnival equipment, line-marking on council land, or whipper snipping.
Personal protective equipment	<p>Personal protective equipment (PPE) is clothing, equipment or substances designed to be worn by someone to protect them from risks of injury or illness. PPE can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hearing protection devices, such as ear muffs and ear plugs • respirators • eye and face protection, such as goggles • safety helmets and sun hats • gloves and safety boots • clothing, such as high visibility vests or life jackets.
Risk assessment	<p>A risk assessment is the overall process or method used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm (hazard identification) • analyse and evaluate the risk associated with that hazard (risk analysis, and risk evaluation) • determine appropriate ways to eliminate the hazard, or control the risk when the hazard cannot be eliminated (risk control).
Schools officer	<p>A schools officer includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools officers – facilities • schools officers – grounds • schools officers – grounds and facilities.
Set down area	The set down area is the designated area used to set down and pick up students. This area is generally on council land.

Legislation

- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#)

- [Public Sector Act 2022 \(Qld\)](#)

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Policies and procedures in this group

- Nil

Supporting information for this procedure

- [Risk assessment – maintenance of areas outside the school grounds template](#)
- [Written request template](#)

Other resources

- [Health, safety and wellbeing incident management procedure](#)
- [Queensland Government indemnity guideline](#)
- [Indemnities – legal assistance to state employees](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Conditional registration explained](#)
- [School zones, parking and pick-up](#)

Contact

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Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

Nil

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