

## Vegetation Control

The Council has the authority to make you fix problems under Section 55 (2) (a) of the Transit New Zealand Act 1989.

The Act allows the Council to serve a notice on an owner or occupier of any land next to a road to cut down or trim any trees that overshadow a road.

**The Council would prefer not to use the powers of the Act. We invite residents or occupiers of land in the District to contact us to discuss any concerns or uncertainties they may have.**

You should also be aware that you may be prosecuted under the Health and Safety in Employment Act if your plantings cause a hazard on your property or off it.

## Frequently asked questions

### Q. When are my roadside trees and hedges a hazard?

A. If they shade the road in winter causing a damp patch that lasts through the day.

### Q. What can I do?

A. Trim the top of hedges on an angle to allow sunlight through to the road, prune them back and lower your hedgerow. You might want to consider their replacement with more appropriate trees.

### Q. Can the Council force me to remove my trees?

A. Yes. Under the Transit New Zealand Act the Council could require your trees to be pruned or removed and if this is not done the Council could do the work itself and charge you for the costs involved.

### Q. I live on an unsealed road, is ice going to be a problem?

A. No not in the immediate future but be aware that the Council does have an ongoing seal extension program.

### Q. My trees are not shading the road but the branches stick out well past my boundary, should I do anything about them?

A. Yes you should. A branch can be a major hazard if a vehicle has to move off the roadway and could cause death or severe injury if large enough.

There should be an area at least 6m wide and 6 m high, from the edge of the roadway, clear of branches. Cyclists, pedestrians and horse-riders, also use roads and road reserves and their needs must also be considered.

### Q. Is ice or frost the only problem?

A. No. Permanently wet or damp patches on the road can also be dangerous for vehicles especially when braking, and the deep shadow behind some hedges can make it hard to see other vehicles, especially in otherwise bright sunlight.

### Q. What does the Health and Safety in Employment Act (The OSH Act) say about this?

A. Under the Health and Safety In Employment Act it is possible you could be liable if an activity on your property (planting, growing and maintaining a shelterbelt or trees) causes a hazard on-site or off-site.

## Guidelines for property owners

# TREES & HEDGES PLANTED NEXT TO ROADS

For further information contact :

the Roding Department

Hurunui District Council Offices

03 314-8816

Or visit our website:  
[www.hurunui.govt.nz](http://www.hurunui.govt.nz)



## Introduction

Trees and hedges provide useful shelter and privacy on our properties. Unfortunately, in some cases, plantings can also cause problems on our roads that may lead to property damage, injury or loss of life. The Hurunui District Council encourages landowners to design and manage their plantings so that they can enjoy their benefits without creating hazards for road users.

Shelterbelts can cause problems by:

- Allowing extra ice to form on roads
- Reducing visibility at intersections and driveways
- Overhanging and impeding other road users
- Obstructing visibility of road signs
- Interfering with services

Tree roots can also damage the road surface and cause crashes.

This guideline outlines the options you have to minimise road hazards through good design and management of plantings beside roads.

No shelterbelts are to be planted on road reserve

## Problems with Ice

Trees and hedges planted on some roadside boundaries can encourage dampness and ice to form on the roads in winter. Icing is more of a problem when the road runs roughly east to west and trees are planted on the north side of the road. If your trees prevent the winter sun from reaching the road surface, the road will not warm up and dry out. The retained moisture and lower temperatures contribute to increased icing.

## Problems with visibility

Road users must be able to clearly see signs, pedestrians and other vehicles. Your plantings must not prevent road users from seeing clearly or obstruct their normal use of the roadway.

Mature growth should be at least 6 metres away from the formed road and there should be no vegetation overhanging the property boundary for 20 metres either side of intersections

## Design Tree & Hedgerow plantings carefully

What are your goals for boundary plantings? Privacy? Shelter from wind? Shelter from sun? Landscaping?

There may be more than one way to achieve your goals so consider your options with road safety in mind. Some points you should consider are:

- If you are planting for privacy only your hedge does not usually need to be any higher than 3 metres.
- Choose plants that will achieve the desired results with low maintenance and trimming (an annual cost saving).
- A shelterbelt that allows 50% of the prevailing wind through is a more effective wind shelter than a solid dense hedge. Trees and hedgerows are not an effective sound barrier.
- Pines and Macrocarpa hedges require more trimming than less vigorous varieties.
- Check what is growing well in your locality or contact your local plant nursery for advice.
- Plant trees well back from your boundary. Branches extending into the safety zone on the road verges could cause you problems in the future.
- Deciduous species shade road less than evergreens. Consider such species where practicable or a combination of low evergreen and taller deciduous trees.

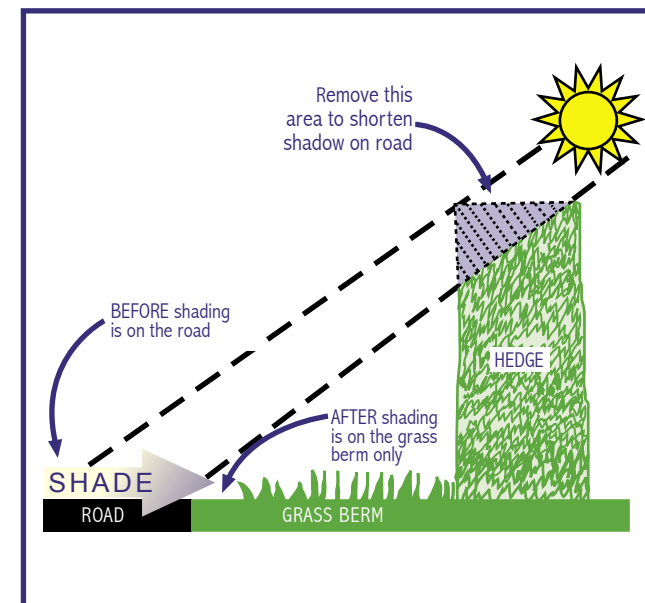


*This photo demonstrates the difference in shading. The hedge in the right-hand foreground is 1 metre higher.*

## Managing trees and hedgerows

Tall roadside trees may need to be topped to allow adequate sun to reach the road surface.

You can trim your hedges in a way that lets enough sunlight onto the road while still maintaining an effective height of the hedge for shelter.



### For example:

Trimming off the grey area as shown in the sketch will move the shadow on the road about the width of the shelterbelt.

Every 400mm removed will take the shadow about 1 metre closer to the shelter. In many cases removing 1 to 1.5m of shade off the road is all that is required.

This photo demonstrates the difference in shading.