

Guidelines for Debris Removal from Streams or Ditches within the City of Carmel

Removing debris and logjams from streams or ditches within the City of Carmel is regulated by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or the Hamilton County Surveyor's office. The City of Carmel does NOT remove logjams or debris on private property.

If the property is traversed by a regulated drain then the Hamilton County Surveyor's Office (317-776-8495) should be contacted for removal guidelines and to determine if they will remove the obstruction.

If the property is traversed by a stream, then the property owner is responsible for the removal of the logjam or debris. Unless the removal operation meets the exemption requirements (see below), the project must be permitted by DNR before the operation can begin. The City reserves the right to request that the owner or responsible party clear and maintain existing watercourses at their own expense in accordance with DNR guidelines to ensure effective watercourse drainage.

The City of Carmel Engineering Department may be contacted at 317-571-2441 for guidance on which agency regulates logjam or debris removal on the stream or ditch.

Do I need a permit?

1. If the debris or a logjam can be removed by meeting the following conditions, then a permit is not required;
 - a. Only hand-held tools, such as chainsaws, axes, hand-saws, etc., may be used in the stream channel.
 - b. Do not grub (pull out) trees or tree stumps from the bank. Leaving stumps holds the bank from eroding.
 - c. No earth-moving should occur. Do not remove sandbars or other soil, sediment, sand, or gravel from the creek. These provide habitat for fish and other aquatic species.
 - d. All trees, brush, and debris that are causing severe obstruction to flow and are proposed for removal, shall be removed from the channel so as not to float downstream during a flood and create another blockage.
 - e. Fallen trees and debris may be dragged from the stream using cables, winches, and vehicles provided the vehicles are NOT used below the top of banks.
 - f. Brush and fallen trees in a creek provide food, shelter, and other benefits to fish and wildlife. Leave as much as possible in a Natural Condition, untouched by humans.

2. If motorized, vehicular equipment, such as a small tractor, backhoe, bulldozer, log skidder, four wheel drive truck, etc. (any heavy equipment), is proposed for use in the stream channel, or anywhere below the top of banks, then the project is NOT exempt from permitting. A Notification of Construction in a Floodway Under IC 14-28-1 for Obstruction Removal for River and Stream Maintenance form must be completed and submitted to DNR. For more information please refer to the DNR Logjam FAQ document or visit www.in.gov/dnr/water.