

Requirements for quarry visibility management plans

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It is a standard requirement for all quarries permitted under the Quarry Materials Act, 1998, that the operation be screened from the public in adjacent areas.

The level of screening required by the Department will vary depending on the situation. However, in general:

- For proposed quarries at locations that are considered higher sensitivity for visibility (near major highways, communities, or where concern has been expressed about scenic values), the intention is that a high level of screening shall be achieved.
- For proposed quarries in more remote locations or in regions of the province with more barrens and less tree cover, the intention is that the site shall be screened to the degree that may be reasonably achieved given the geography of the immediate area and the accessibility of the resource.

The purpose of a visibility management plan is for the proponent to illustrate how, and to what extent, the proposed quarry operation will be screened from view of the general public.

Visibility management plans shall meet the following requirements:

1. In producing the visibility management plan, the proponent is directed to consider how the quarry operation can be planned so that it is least visible to the public, including from highways, communities and any other locations of known or potential concern.

In particular, the proponent shall consider how existing tree screens and topography may be used for screening. If screening by means of tree screens and topographic features would be inadequate, then the proponent shall consider where berms could be constructed to achieve further screening. Similarly, screening by means of berms shall be considered for locations where there are no stands of trees available for screening or where operations cannot be screened behind topographic features.

Where portions of the operation cannot be screened by the above measures, the proponent shall consider whether changes to the site plan, site footprint, or planned phases of site development could decrease the visibility of the operation.

Stands of trees and embankments alongside a highway are often very useful for screening quarries from view. However, where trees in the immediate vicinity of the quarry boundary are needed for screening, it is necessary that trees within the boundary be preserved for this purpose. Maintaining a tree screen only on the exterior of the quarry boundary would not be

acceptable because other land uses may alter that tree screen in future and screening of the operation would not be in the control of the quarry operator.

Stands of trees identified as necessary for screening purposes must be maintained at a minimum width (thickness) of at least 15 m.

2. The visibility management plan must clearly illustrate the extent to which the quarry operation will be screened from the public and must make use of topographic sections (i.e., topographic profiles) with sightlines depicted for representative locations of concern.

Each topographic section must show a complete cross-section of the proposed quarry, including a depiction of the ground that will eventually be excavated (i.e., a depiction of the current surface and the expected final surface).

Topographic sections with sightlines were submitted to satisfy the same requirement for other proposed quarries and the proponent is directed to use the examples contained in the documents linked below for guidance:

- a. https://www.gov.nl.ca/eccm/files/env_assessment_y2020_1964_Viewsscape_management_plan.pdf
 - b. https://www.gov.nl.ca/eccm/files/env_assessment_y2021_2101-viewsscape_management_plan.pdf
 - c. <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ecc/files/EA-2153-Registration-document.pdf>
3. Measures proposed for screening the quarry operation must be fully described and depicted on a plan map of the site and their screening effects depicted on the topographic sections. For tree screens, the width or thickness of the treed buffer must be specified as well as the average height of the trees. For berms, the height, width, and composition of the berm must be specified.

Should a quarry lease be required for the operation, then the development and reclamation plan that will be required as part of the quarry lease must include the visibility management plan (updated from an earlier version of the visibility management plan if necessary) and each update of the development and reclamation plan must include an updated visibility management plan.