

## REINSTATEMENT OF GRASS VERGES

The attached guidance note concerning the non-structural aspects of verge reinstatement was agreed for use by SEHAUC.

Introduction - these Notes relate to the non-structural aspects of verge reinstatement

Highway verges perform an important function, both in practical and environmental terms. It is essential that Statutory Undertakers identify the special requirements associated with verges and employ a structured approach to treating them during the works.

It is the duty of the Undertaker to ensure that grassed or planted areas are reinstated to their former condition, such that a reasonable growth shall be established within the following 12 months. Undertakers should also be mindful that their own apparatus may be at risk from close proximity to root systems. The specification code of practice for the reinstatement of openings in Highways section S9 covers the basic requirements. The purpose of this note is to give further guidance and detail on the topic of reinstatement of verges.

### Soil

The handling, storage and preparation of soil is the most important factor in re-establishing growth following Statutory Undertakers works.

Soils for reinstatement should be those derived from the site and none should be removed unless it is clear that the re-soiling requirements cannot be met from this source. The topsoil and subsoil layers should be stripped and stored in separate piles under favourable weather conditions in storage mounds not exceeding 2m in height and these must not be trafficked by any machinery. The structure of clay soil, in particular, is irreversibly damaged by stripping when it is too wet.

When it is time to reinstate, the formation on which soil is spread must have the surface roughened to 150mm deep to allow it to key in properly. Once again, compaction must be avoided. In all cases the surface shall be left free from stones greater than 20mm nominal size.

### Grass Verges

Prior to the reinstatement at ground level, soil layers will have been handled as detailed above. If turfs were originally cut and stored they should be returned and laid to ensure the soil surface is covered. If the area is to be seeded, a seed bed should be prepared to ensure good germination. If topsoil is required to be imported to act as a seed bed or rooting medium for turves, it should not exceed 50mm in depth as its higher fertility status can lead to excessive weed growth.

Most grasses will germinate quickly in spring (March/April) or autumn (September). At other times of year grasses tend to germinate over a long period and so it is recommended that Statutory Undertakers and their contractors seed during times specified above. No fertiliser should be used. A standard seed mix is generally recommended (as detailed below), but a site-specific mix should be used if recommended by the local Highways Department.

### Grass Seed Mixture per 50kg

	kg	%
Perennial Rye Grass	12.5	25
Strong Creeping Red Fescue	10.0	20
Hard Fescue	15.0	30

Smooth-stalked Meadow Grass	5.0	10
Highland Browntop Bent	5.0	10
Huia White Clover	2.0	5

Maintenance of grassed areas: where seeding has taken place, in particular, aftercare will be required.

Verge Flora

Statutory Undertakers should be aware that the Highway Authority identifies verge sites of particular botanical interest which must be protected from unnecessary disturbance. They will generally be marked out, eg by posts, but in any case consultation should be sought from the local office.

**Cross Reference Information:**

NRSWA 1991 Section 70 . 73

Code of Practice: REINSTATEMENT

Regulations: No. 1689(REINSTATEMENT)

SEHAUC Meeting: 12th SEPTEMBER 1995

**Signed:**

Chairman Vice-Chairman

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**SOUTH EAST HIGHWAY AUTHORITIES & UTILITIES COMMITTEE**