

City of Galveston Planning Commission's Recommended Best Practices for Beach Maintenance

Statement of Purpose

This document has been prepared to help enhance the beach experience and improve environmental stewardship for the benefit of all beach users. The beaches of Galveston provide many unique and diverse recreational opportunities while serving as one of the Island's primary economic engines that provide fully a third of all jobs within the city and are a major factor in Galveston's future economic development.

These recommendations seek to foster the use of sustainable beach maintenance practices that provide the greatest public benefit, enacted in consideration for local beach dynamics, while using the least intrusive method possible. Many considerations factor into the decision process including: necessity, seasonal and species windows, potential impacts of activity, avoidance of native vegetation, and proximity to visitors. It can often be appropriate to take no action dependent on the location, volume of seaweed and time of year. The most common beach maintenance practices include seaweed relocation, litter control, and debris removal.

A summary listing of underlying principles in the maintenance of beaches includes:

- A. Consider necessity of proposed action.
- B. Consider seasonal and species impacts of proposed actions.
- C. Use least intrusive method possible.
- D. Avoid seaweed relocation practices that negatively impact native vegetation.
- E. To enhance public safety do not operate equipment in populated areas whenever possible.

Best Management Practice Recommendations for Seaweed Relocation Activities and Debris Removal

I. Beach Cleaning: Scope of Activities / Area of Activities

- 1. Best Practice: Undertake seaweed cleaning and debris removal based on necessity.
- 2. Best Practice: Discourage grooming of the wet beach for regular maintenance or aesthetic enhancements.
- 3. Beach maintenance contractors and/or agencies performing beach maintenance shall submit a City of Galveston Contractor registration application prior to performing beach maintenance activities.

II. Beach Maintenance: Scope of Activities / Area of Activities

- 1. Best Practice: Allow grooming of dry beach with mechanized beach rake and front loader only; prohibit the use of heavy construction equipment for grooming purposes.
- 2. Best Practice: Evenly distribute relocated seaweed along beach frontage area to reduce beach narrowing. Collected seaweed can be distributed along the seaward toe of the dune.
- 3. Best Practice: Do not remove or relocate sand from the permitted area.
- 4. Best Practice: Consider vegetating seaweed stacking areas.

III. Surveys and Monitoring

- 1. Best Practice: Current survey information should be provided to the city, city's survey data shall meet this information requirement.
- 2. Best Practice: Utilize uniform and standardized survey control points as specified by the City of Galveston.

IV. Technology/Equipment

1. Best Practice: Prohibit the use of Road Grader/Maintainer, Skid Steer, or other heavy tracked equipment for seaweed cleaning.
2. Best Practice: Provide evidence of operator training and competency
3. Best Practice: Front Loader type equipment must utilize a bucket level control indicator to prevent scour or gouging of the beach (also known as a float mechanism).
4. Best Practice: Grooming of dry beach with mechanized beach rake and front loader.

V. Environmental Review/Compliance

1. Best Practice: Permittees should report evidence of turtle nesting to the Texas General Land Office.
2. Prohibited Activity: Beach maintenance activities shall not redistribute sand.
3. Prohibited Activity: Beach maintenance activities shall not alter profile of the beach.
4. Prohibited Activity: the use of Road Grader/Maintainer, Skid Steer, or other heavy tracked equipment for seaweed cleaning.

V. Sworn Application: A party seeking to perform beach maintenance shall file with the Planning Department a sworn application that affirms the beach maintenance activities shall conform to these best management practices; and, specifically the maintenance activities shall not result in the prohibited activities outlined in Section V. Environmental Review and Compliance.

VII. Planning Department Appeal: Appeal of a decision from the Planning Department regarding beach maintenance sworn application shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

IX. Fines and Remedies for violation of sworn affidavit: Any violation of any provision of these Recommended Best Practices for Beach Maintenance shall be unlawful and a misdemeanor offense punishable by a fine not exceeding Five Hundred (\$500.00) Dollars. Each day a violation of these best practices shall constitute a separate offense.