

# FACT SHEET - VTRANS PESTICIDE PROGRAM

Prepared for 2024 Legislative Session on behalf of Vermont Agency of Transportation  
by Brandon Garretto [brandon.garretto@vermont.gov], VTrans District Maintenance and Fleet Division,  
Pollution Prevention & Compliance, Water Quality Unit  
More information at [VTrans Vegetation Management Homepage](#)

This Fact Sheet is specific to VTrans' Pesticide Program initiatives including highway guardrail spraying, airport weed management, and spraying supporting projects and construction. VTrans pesticide spraying operations are regulated by the [Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets](#) which requires annual permitting, certifying new applicators, and quality assurance testing chemical mixes.

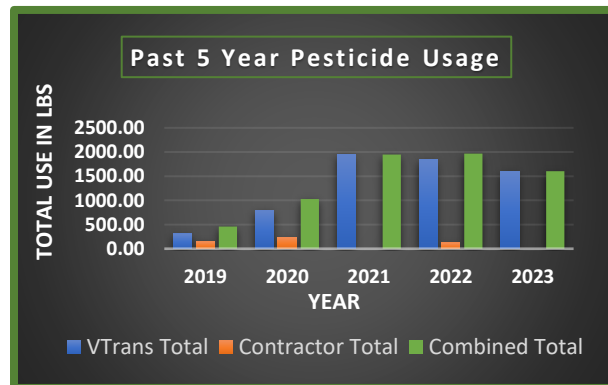
## Why should we spray highway guardrail and state airports?

- Spraying guardrails is part of our IVMP (integrated vegetation management plan) which focuses on aesthetics, economic benefits, environmental sustainability, and safety.
- Properly managed vegetation along the roadside can help increase air circulation, and the amount of sunlight reaching the pavement which in turn increases dry pavement conditions.
- It enhances safety by increasing sight distance for wildlife, signs, intersections, traffic signals and driveways.
- Controls the growth of woody vegetation along roads as their roots systems compromise pavement integrity.
- Promote worker safety by controlling noxious weeds (poisonous plants) in areas workers are expected to access.
- Economically more sustainable than mechanical methods.



## What does our chemical usage look like over the years?

- **From 2010 – 2018:** VTrans utilized contractors for all guardrail spraying and airport weed management.
- **From 2019 – 2020:** VTrans utilized a retrofitted liquid salt/plow truck for highway guardrail, and a smaller spray unit for airport fence-line spraying.
- **2021 – Present:** Beginning in 2021, VTrans District Maintenance and Fleet Division has implemented three custom spray units to optimize guardrail spraying efficiency and save money in the long run by cutting out contracted spraying and keeping the operation in house.



## What are we working on for the 2024 Spay Season?

- Utilized three custom spray units to eliminate the reliance on contracted services during the spray season for three years.
- A standardized maintenance plan is being developed to maintain the spray units.
- Continuously working with our sister agency Dept. of Agriculture to track, report, and in turn reduce the pesticide usage while maintaining our right-of-way and prioritizing safety and transportation infrastructure protection.
- Striving to maintain 18 certified pesticide applicators as part of VTrans' workforce.
- Automating our pesticide dashboard which is available to the public and can show the amount we spray per season.
- Replaced nine iPads dedicated to supporting the Pesticide Spray Program with up-to-date maps, pre-marking sites, usage data and no spray areas.
- Our Roadside Integrated Vegetation Management Plan is being updated as new research and data is available to us. This will help manage our infrastructure and collaborate with the many stakeholders involved more effectively.
- The [Standard Operating Procedure](#) we use for daily spray operations is being updated which will include some of the following: truck washing, disposal of excess chemical, new AAF&M rule for 2024, etc.

