Every year, the Transportation Division investigates hundreds of calls regarding sight obstructions. Sight obstructions occur when something is limiting the visibility of a driver to see oncoming traffic, a hazard in the roadway or a traffic control device. Most commonly, the obstruction is vegetation that has overgrown and is limiting visibility. Vegetation that has grown to block the line of sight can dramatically limit or prohibit the ability to see pedestrians, traffic signs and other vehicles.

Therefore, keeping vegetation properly maintained is one of the most important things we can do to maximize visibility and improve traffic safety. The Division has provided residents with a few guidelines on this important issue.

Street and Sidewalk Clearance

To ensure that visibility is not restricted, please trim and maintain all trees to at least eight feet over sidewalks and 14 feet over streets. See Figure 1 for an illustration. Refer to City Code 8.6.3 (D) for more information.

![Figure 1](image1.png)

**Visibility on Corner Lots**

Keeping bushes and trees trimmed and maintained on corners is especially important. If a corner is blocked or partially blocked by overgrown vegetation, it may be difficult to spot traffic, pedestrians and traffic control devices, such as stop signs, thus increasing the potential for crashes.

For this reason, bushes and shrubs within the 80 foot triangle (see Figure 2) should be trimmed and maintained to a height of 30 inches or less above sidewalks and curbs. In addition, trees within this area should be trimmed so that the lowest branches do not extend below eight feet. The best test is to check for visibility.

Although vegetation is the most common visibility limitation on corners, the 80 foot triangle also applies to fences, walls, signs and any other possible obstruction.

**Visibility of Traffic Signs and Signals**

Stop signs, speed limit signs, yellow diamond-shaped warning signs and traffic signals are just a few of the many traffic control devices we rely on to keep traffic moving safely and efficiently.

For maximum visibility, traffic control devices need to be seen from a distance of at least 200
feet for 25 mph residential streets, and up to 600 feet for high speed arterial streets. For this reason, it is especially important to keep bushes, trees and other vegetation properly trimmed and maintained. Refer to City Code 8.6.3 (D) for more information.

City Ordinance:

City of Mesa Code 8.6.3 (D) states:

No owner or occupant of land within the City of Mesa shall allow or permit trees, shrubs, or plant growth on that land to impede, obstruct, or interfere with the passage of any street, sidewalk, or alley within the City or the visibility of any traffic control device or signal.

If you have any questions about vegetation and visibility, or if you have a traffic concern, contact our traffic studies staff at 480.644.2160.