

Interim Guidance to Minimize Disturbance Effects of 24/7 Use of Generators and Pumps to Marbled Murrelet

April 22, 2025

This interim guidance must be applied to Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) projects located within 328 feet of suitable marbled murrelet habitat that continuously operate generators/pumps during crepuscular and night hours during the murrelet nesting season (April 1-September 23). This guidance can be applied to both U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) programmatic-covered projects and individual consultations.

This continuous-generator-use best management practices (BMP) guidance document should be discussed during early coordination (pre-BA meetings) prior to closing early coordination, included with programmatic and individual consultation submittals, and included with project updates that currently don't have a resolution to generator use.

Marbled murrelet disturbance monitoring guidance and BMPs required for such projects, per the USFWS and WSDOT email correspondence "2025.01.21USFWS_Noise guidance_durham.pdf", are as follows:

- Use quietest pumps/generators available.
- Use battery-operated lighting for traffic management (i.e., in lieu of generators) where practicable.
- Shield and direct traffic management lighting to the roadway surface and traffic 'stop-line'; avoid illuminating adjacent habitat.
- Use attenuation blankets or similar BMPs
- Place pumps/generators to take advantage of topography to improve attenuation.
- Place pumps/generators over 50 feet from suitable nest trees, if practicable
- A map and sound measurements will be provided as an informational update showing compliance with the programmatic Project Notification Form.
- Should an emergency occur during crepuscular and nighttime hours requiring immediate resolution (example: pump/generator failure or traffic accident in the work zone) the Design Builder (contractor) can enter to resolve the situation.
- Record and report attenuated sound levels for initial setup and as equipment is moved or altered, to describe and document the following:
 - dB sound levels at the source.
 - dB sound levels at 50 feet from the source with clear line of sight (one time reading per piece of equipment).
 - Distance (feet) to nearest suitable murrelet habitat and/or suitable nest limbs and trees.
 - dB sound levels at nearest suitable murrelet habitat and/or suitable nest limbs and trees.
 - Ambient sound measurement exclusive of traffic noise and collected during calm weather. This measurement is required to be taken only once.
 - If the pump/generator is moved, additional sound measurements/levels will be recorded.
 - At the conclusion of the season, maps and recorded sound measurements shall be compiled with a narrative for submittal to USFWS by December 31 of the construction year.

In addition, given the time-of-day component to the guidance, and to ensure that project activities do not result in significant disruption of essential nesting behaviors within disturbance threshold distances, WSDOT or the contractor will employ BMPs and collect sound levels to demonstrate that:

- Attenuated sound levels do not exceed 70 dBA at sensitive resources (nest tree or edge of suitable habitat).
- Attenuated sound levels do not exceed 20 dB above ambient sound during crepuscular hours at sensitive resources (nest tree or edge of suitable habitat).