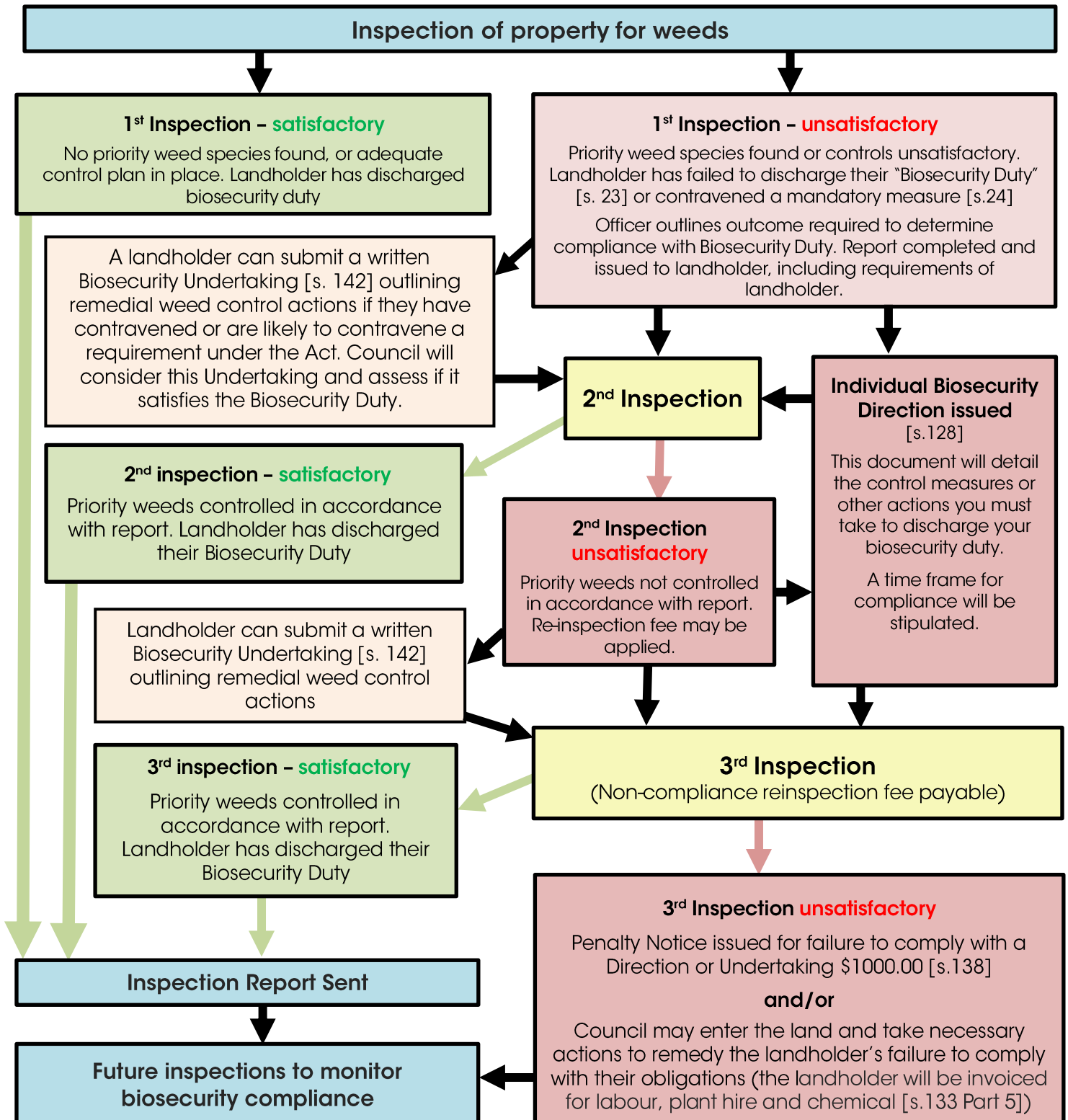


Weed Inspection Procedure



NOTE

Penalty Notices may be issued at any stage during the inspection process if the landholder fails in his or her obligations under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. Fines of \$1,000.00 or \$2,000.00 apply

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I be present during the inspection?

Yes. Not only do you have the right to be present during the inspection, we encourage your attendance.

How long will the inspection take?

This depends on several factors, including the property size, access to the property, the terrain and the presence or prevalence of any priority weed species. Council Biosecurity staff are trained and authorised to undertake the inspection, and this may occur by foot or in a vehicle. In some instances, UAVs (or 'drones') may be used.

Can I stop the inspection from taking place?

No – the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the 'Act') requires the inspection be conducted and is in accordance with s.371 (c) of the Act, which describes Council's function as "to inspect land in connection with its weed control functions", and s. 98 (1) which states "An authorised officer may enter any premises ... at any reasonable time".

What happens if my gate is locked and I do not provide access?

Biosecurity Officers are legally permitted to cut locks or chains to gain entry to a property to conduct functions per the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. Officers will cut the chain, replace with a lock in series, and the keys will be sent attached to the property report. Council will not keep a copy of the keys.

What weed species are Council inspecting for?

Biosecurity Officers are looking for any species that have been identified as priority weed species under state, regional or local plans. This includes but is not limited to: Blackberry, African lovegrass, Serrated tussock, St John's Wort, Broom (Scotch/English, Flax-leaf, Spanish or Cape), Gorse, Lantana, and Crofton weed. More information on priority weed species for the Bega Valley can be found at NSW WeedWise online <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/>

What happens if I have priority weed species growing on my property?

After the inspection, a report (including information about the species and outlining any action required) will be sent to the registered property owner. If necessary, a reinspection will be scheduled to determine if adequate control measures have been undertaken.

What if I can't undertake the work required or need more time?

Council staff are available to confidentially discuss any issues you may have in this regard and will determine an appropriate course of action that takes into consideration your circumstances.

What if I don't agree with the information on the report?

Contact Council's Biosecurity officers to discuss any concerns you have about your inspection report.

Are there any costs involved in the inspection process?

No, there is no fee for the landholder for the initial inspection. However, fees may apply if officers are required to return for compliance re-inspections.

What if I don't control my weed problem?

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* you have a biosecurity duty to ensure that any biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised – so far as reasonably practicable and proportionate to the priority of the threat. Heavy fines apply for offences committed under the Act.

More information about Council's Inspection process can be found at www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/weeds

More information about the Biosecurity Act 2015 can be found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact

How you can assist us to conduct the inspection safely

- Ensure that all gates are unlocked so the officer can gain access. If a gate needs to be locked, please contact us to make suitable arrangements for access.
- Be sure dogs and other animals are safely enclosed or tied up.
- Notify us of any health or safety concerns specific to your property.
- The officer will approach a residential building to introduce themselves first. Please advise any tenants or other occupants that this inspection may occur.