

Homeowner Association Tree Care Policy

Common Area Trees – Tree Removal

An ISA Certified Arborist must document the recommendation for removal of any common area tree over 6” diameter at breast height (DBH) to be submitted to the General Manager (GM), Assistant GM, or Facilities & Grounds Manager (authorized association representative).

Exceptions apply when the tree poses an imminent danger to life, limb, or property. In such cases, documentation may be submitted after removal and cleanup.

Applications must include species, location, size (DBH), overall condition, reason for removal, printed name, signature, and ISA certification number of the Certified Arborist. Arborist recommendations may accompany the application in lieu of signature if signed.

Homeowner Association Contracting with a Tree Company – Qualifications

All recommendations for tree work, excluding tree planting or stump grinding, must be approved by an ISA Certified Arborist.

Tree contractors must have ISA Certified Arborists and/or ISA Certified Tree Workers on every job site while work is performed.

Tree contractors must be accredited by the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA).

Additional sources for verifying qualifications include Checkbook Magazine, Better Business Bureau, Angie’s List, Google Reviews, Yelp, and other reputable review sites.

Contractors must provide a current certificate of insurance sent directly from the insurance agency, listing the Association as additional insured.

All work must comply with ANSI Z133 Safety Standards and ANSI A300 Industry Standards.

Emergency Tree Work Priority

The following or similar wording shall be included in long-term agreements with qualified tree contractors:

“Priority will be given to the Association during emergencies. Emergencies are defined as dangerous trees with identified targets such as buildings, roads, or sidewalks, often resulting from severe weather. Emergency work shall occur within 48 hours of notification and approval by an authorized Association representative.”

Tree Pruning

Trees located near pedestrian or vehicle traffic areas shall be inspected regularly to reduce risk.

Pruning shall remove large deadwood, dying, or diseased branches and maintain clearance from walkways, drives, parking areas, buildings, lights, and structures.

A minimum clearance of three feet shall be maintained in most cases.

Cleanup Conditions

When a tree is cut near ground level and felled into a natural wooded area, it may be left whole to appear natural, unless excessive accumulation occurs.

Brush and limbs not attached to the trunk must be removed or scattered naturally, not piled.

If the area is an easement or stream area, the entire above-ground portion of the tree must be removed.

If a trunk requires more than one cut above ground, all cut trunk sections are considered debris and must be removed.

Trees removed from non-wooded common areas require stump grinding and backfilling unless utility conflicts or otherwise approved.

Stump Grinding

Miss Utility must be contacted prior to stump grinding or digging.

No stumps may be ground within two horizontal feet of marked utilities, per Virginia law. All Miss Utility regulations must be followed.

Tree Planting

Not all removed trees will be replaced. Replacement decisions are made by authorized Association representatives.

Miss Utility must mark utilities prior to digging.

All trees must be planted according to Virginia Cooperative Extension / Virginia Tech "Tree and Shrub Planting Guidelines" (Publication 430-295).

An independent ISA Certified Arborist should be consulted for species selection.

All work must be inspected and approved prior to payment.

Trees should be planted in mulched islands when possible. Mulch depth shall be 2–3 inches and shall not contact the trunk flare.

Guying materials, if used, must be removed within one year.

Except in rare cases, planted trees shall not exceed 6–8 feet in height.

Terms and Definitions

DBH: Diameter at Breast Height (approximately 4.5 feet above ground).

GM / Assistant GM: Association General Manager or Assistant General Manager.

ISA: International Society of Arboriculture.

ISA Certified Arborist: Individual meeting ISA education, experience, examination, and ethics requirements.

TCIA: Tree Care Industry Association.

Problem Tree Species (Reference)

Box Elder, Norway Maple, Silver Maple, Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven), Mimosa, Bamboo, White-barked Birches, Paper Mulberry, Catalpa, White Dogwood, English Hawthorn, Leyland Cypress, Green Ash, Honeylocust (except seedless cultivars), Black Walnut, Sweetgum (non-hybrid), Osage Orange, White and Red Mulberry, Princess Tree, White Pine, Cottonwood, Lombardy Poplar, Flowering Plums, Bradford Pear, Black Locust, Willows, Mountain Ash, Siberian Elm.