

## Common Area Tree Policy

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 GM/Assistant GM/Facilities & Ground Manager (also referred to as authorized association representative). Exceptions to [GM, Assistant GM and/or F&G Mgr] would be situations where the tree poses an imminent danger to life, limb or property. Application must be submitted and signed by an ISA Certified Arborist prior to removing trees except in the case where the tree(s) pose(s) an imminent danger, in which case the documentation may be submitted after removal and clean up. Application to include species, location, size (DBH), overall condition of tree, reason for removal, printed name of ISA Certified Arborist, signature of ISA Certified Arborist, ISA certification number and signature date. The recommendations of the ISA Certified Arborist may accompany the application in lieu of the arborist's signature on the application itself, as long as the recommendations are signed and dated.

### **HOA 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 contractor must have ISA Certified Arborist(s) and/or ISA Certified Tree Worker(s) on every job site while work is being performed.

Tree contractor must be Accredited by the Tree Care Industry Association

Additional places to check qualifications:

Checkbook Magazine

Better Business Bureau

Angie's List, Google reviews, Yelp reviews and other online reviews.

Contractor must send a **current** certificate of insurance to the management office prior to bidding on and/or performing work. Association to be listed as "additional insured" on the certificate of insurance. The certificate of insurance must come directly from the insurance agency, not from the contractor.

**All tree work must be done in accordance with ANSI Z133 Safety Standards and ANSI A300 Industry standards. Appropriate wording must be included in all tree contracts.**

### **Emergency Tree Work Priority: Storm damage**

**The following or similar wording to be included in any long-term agreement with qualified tree contractor:**

"Priority will be given to association during emergencies. Emergencies are described as dangerous trees with an identified target (building, road, sidewalk, etc). Emergencies are often the result of severe weather. Priority timing is defined as work taking place within 48 hours of alerting tree contractor and work being approved by an authorized association representative." For obvious safety reasons, areas within the "target zone" of a dangerous tree should be marked with ribbon, cones, and/or other barriers to entry and clearly marked to warn pedestrians to keep out.

**Clean up conditions:** When a tree is cut down at near ground level and felled onto a natural wooded area, the tree can be left "whole" as a natural fallen tree. Exceptions include situations where the sheer number of fallen trees is too large to appear "natural". Brush or limbs, if not left attached to the trunk must be removed from site or "scattered" within the natural wooded area,

not piled up in a “rats nest” fashion. If the common wooded area is determined to be an easement or stream area, the entire above ground portion of the tree will be required to be removed. If the trunk of the tree requires more than one cut above ground level base, the tree and all the cut pieces will be considered debris and are required to be removed. This refers to the trunk only and not cuts made to branches attached to the trunk. Additionally, if a tree is removed from a common area and not in a natural wooded area, unless there is a conflict with utility lines or another legitimate reason approved by the homeowner association authorized representative, the stump must be ground or removed and the hole backfilled to ground level.

All work must be inspected and approved by an authorized representative of the HOA prior to payment(s) issued to the tree contractor.

**Stump Grinding:** Miss Utility must be called to mark for underground utilities before any stump grinding or other digging takes place. No stumps are to be ground within 2 horizontal feet of a marked utility, in accordance with Virginia law. All Miss Utility regulations must be adhered to.

**Tree Planting:** Not all trees removed from common areas will be replaced. The authorized association representative will determine whether trees will be replaced based on the reason for removal and other criteria. Miss Utility must mark location prior to digging to mark for underground utilities per Virginia law.

All trees will be planted in accordance with the Virginia Cooperative Extension/Virginia Tech “Tree and Shrub Planting Guidelines” Publication 430-295. See link below.

Link: [https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs\\_ext\\_vt\\_edu/430/430-295/430-295\\_pdf.pdf](https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/430/430-295/430-295_pdf.pdf)

An independent ISA Certified Arborist should be consulted prior to planting trees to make recommendations for species appropriate for the particular site.

***See Problem tree list below as a reference.***

Ideally, trees should be planted in “islands” rather than as individual trees surrounded by turf. Mulch should be spread in a 2-3 inch thin layer over as much of the root system as possible. Mulch should never touch the root flare or trunk

If guying material is necessary -it usually is not, it should never be left in place for no more than one year. Contractor planting the trees must come back to remove all guying material on trees within one year of planting. Larger caliper trees do not adapt and establish as well as smaller trees. Except in rare circumstances, planted trees should not be larger than 6-8 feet tall.

**Pest and Disease Control:** All recommendations for pest and/or disease treatments and control must be made by and ISA Certified Arborist who is also a Virginia Certified Pest Control Applicator. All such treatments must be performed by a Virginia Certified Pest Control Applicator or a Certified Registered Technician under the supervision of a Certified Pest Control Applicator.

Signage warning the public must be present wherever applications are administered and kept in place until the area is safe for people and pets. In case of a chemical or other material spill, the HOA office or authorized representative must be informed immediately. The contractor is responsible for following all EPA guidelines for reporting, containing, and cleanup of the spill.

**Terms:**

**DBH:** Diameter at breast height, approximately 4.5 feet above ground level.

**EPA:** The Environmental Protection Agency

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

**HOA:** Homeowner's Association

**ISA:** International Society of Arboriculture: The ISA is the organization responsible for training and certifying arborists.

**ISA Certified Arborist:** Must have at least 3 years full-time experience or a degree in the field of arboriculture, horticulture, landscape architecture, or forestry from an accredited institute to qualify for the exam. The exam covers a large number of topics. The candidate who passes the exam must also adhere to the ISA Certified Arborists code of ethics.

Find an ISA Certified Arborist Search Link:

<https://www.treesaregood.org/findanarborist/findanarborist>

**TCIA:** Tree Care Industry Association

**TCIA Accreditation:** Designation of tree companies meeting stringent criteria for professionalism, employee training, state and federal safety regulations, business ethics and customer satisfaction.

Find a TCIA Accredited Tree Company Search Link:

[https://www.tcia.org/TCIA/MEMBERSHIP/Find\\_Quality\\_Tree\\_Care/TCIA/Directories/FindQualifiedTreeCare.aspx](https://www.tcia.org/TCIA/MEMBERSHIP/Find_Quality_Tree_Care/TCIA/Directories/FindQualifiedTreeCare.aspx)

**Problem tree list:**

Box elder: Grows quickly, rots quickly, box elder bugs

Norway maple: Can be an invasive, dense shade allows nothing to grow under.

Silver maple: Short-lived, grows very large quickly, surface roots

Ailanthus or tree of heaven: Short lived; invasive

Mimosa: Short-lived, wilt disease, seeds volunteers

Bamboo: Extremely invasive

White-barked birches: quickly killed by bronze birch borers

Paper mulberry: Weed tree, roots

Catalpa: Brittle wood, seeds everywhere

White dogwood: Discula anthracnose

English hawthorn: Thorny; defoliated in summer by rust disease

Leyland cypress: Dying from wetfeet and Seridium canker. Grows very fast, ice/snow damage

Green ash: Numerous pest problems, especially borers

Honeylocust: Multiple insect problems; thorns and seeds, except seedless cultivars.

Black walnut: Drops large fruit and leaves early; allelopathic to other plants

Sweetgum: Fruit gumballs are a hazard; litter and maintenance problems, unless a newer hybrid without gumballs

Osage orange: Thorns; falling fruit

White and red mulberries: Smelly fruit that birds use to paint cars and houses purple

Princess or empress tree: Invasive due to massive seed production

White pine: Not tolerant of poorly drained, compacted urban soils

Cottonwood: Surface roots; cotton on seeds coats everything

Lombardy poplar: Short-lived; grows too fast; aggressive roots

Flowering plums: Black knot disease can cause severe dieback

Bradford pear: V-crotch branch attachments split easily (self-destructing tree)

Black locust: Thorns, shallow roots; suckers; insects; topples easily in storms

Willows: Grows fast and split easily; trunk cankers; roots invade pipe openings

Mountain ashes: Numerous pest problems

Siberian elm: Breaks easily in storms; defoliated by elm leaf beetles