



Property, Development & Retail Management

Tree Surveys and Maintenance Work

Mandatory - October 2017



Landsec
One Best
Way



One Best Way

Essential information about our
Health & Safety Standards.

Property, Development & Retail Management

Tree Surveys and Maintenance Work

Overview

Each year between five and six people in the UK are killed when trees or branches fall on them. Around three people are killed each year by trees in public spaces. Thus, the risk of being struck and killed by a tree or branch falling is extremely low (in the order of one in 10 million for those trees in or adjacent to areas of high public use). However, the low level of overall risk may not be perceived in this way by the public, particularly following an incident.

The average risk is firmly in the “broadly acceptable” region of the tolerability of risk triangle published in HSE’s “Reducing Risks, Protecting People”. However, “Reducing Risks, Protecting People” explicitly states that “broadly acceptable” is a general guide and not a definitive statement of what is reasonably practicable in law.

— Trees are living organisms and as such change over time. They can grow to unmanageable proportions, cause structural damage and contract diseases which make them weak and subsequently dangerous.

— Whilst lots of organisations state that they are fully qualified Tree Surgeons or Arboricultural Consultants, not all companies would meet the competency criteria we would look for at Landsec. This document is to assist persons responsible for trees within their site boundaries to manage, maintain and conduct work.





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What are tree surveys?

An arboriculture survey or “tree survey” determines the health of the tree and any maintenance work required to maintain the health of the tree. The survey identifies unnatural growth, disease and any dead wood or hung branches that may be likely to fall. Other types of tree surveys include tree impact assessments which may be needed when planning applications are required or disputes negotiated.

How often should surveys be conducted?

If you do not already have a tree survey dated within the last three years or to your knowledge you don't hold one, then you should have an initial survey conducted.

Surveys are similar to risk assessments in that once the survey has been conducted you will have a list of actions which might include works to be carried out, further reports to be conducted and will set out an inspection schedule. Just like risk assessments these surveys require regular review such as after high winds or storms and as detailed by the surveyor.

As a minimum, a tree survey should be carried out every three years.

How often should we inspect trees?

How often you are required to inspect your trees will be determined by the risk and will be detailed in your tree survey. If your trees are small, immature, you are in a site which is shielded from weather and the trees are not next to a path or road then your inspection frequency will be far less than a site where you may have large, mature trees that are exposed and near paths or roads.

Your inspection frequency will be further reduced if the tree is showing signs of damage or disease as these will require careful monitoring.

If you have an exposed site you should include local inspections after high winds to ensure that no branches have broken free and are hanging in the tree.





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Action to be taken:

May 2017

Status:

Mandatory

Further help & contacts:

If you need any further information or guidance please contact any member of the Health, Safety & Security Team.

What if our tree survey identifies work that is required?

The first things you need to establish when work is required on your trees is:

- Are you in a conservation area?
- Are the trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)?

This is usually established by the surveyor or consultant, however this information can be found by ringing the local council tree officer who will be able to give you this information.

If trees are located in conservation areas or protected by TPO's then any non-emergency works must have planning applications submitted and approved prior to work being conducted. Emergency work such as windblown or damaged trees in danger of falling can be worked on without planning as can dead wooding however, these works should have before and after pictures taken to prove that these works were absolutely necessary. Any works to remove damaged limbs or dead wooding which does not require the removal of the tree in its entirety can be conducted without planning permission.

Who can conduct tree surveys?

Before engaging a Surveyor ensure that they are registered with the Arboriculture Association (Arb Association) www.trees.org.uk. The Arb Association has a list of accredited consultants.

Who can conduct work on trees?

Unless your landscape contractor is registered with the Arb Association as a Tree Surgeon or Arboriculture Contractor do not allow your landscape contractors to conduct work on trees (with the exception of pruning branches to keep them from paths, roads or walkways).

Contractors must be registered with the Arb Association and hold the required NPTC City and Guilds certificates. When contractors attend your site, they should be able to produce their NPTC photographic ID which references their competency. This can be checked at www.nptc.org.uk/qualificationschemes.aspx?id=9

References

- The Arb Association www.trees.org.uk
- The HSE www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/sims/ag_food/010705.htm#Appendix-1
- City & Guilds NPTC www.nptc.org.uk/qualificationschemes.aspx?id=9

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Publication No.
AA100-OBW-23 Tree Surveys
and Maintenance Work

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