



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Tree Damage and Restitution

Purpose:

To provide the Departments of Parks & Recreation and Public Works staff with clear procedures for tree damage restitution pursuant to Ordinance 25-4, Tree Preservation.

Scope:

This SOP applies to all city-sponsored construction projects per Ordinance 25-4.

Related Documents:

- Tree Preservation Ordinance 25-4
- City Legislative Code—Chapter 176. Preservation and Protection of Trees
- International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), Council of Tree & Landscape Appraisers—Guide for Plant Appraisal (latest edition)
- Minnesota Society of Arboriculture—Supplement to the Guide for Plant Appraisal (ISA) (latest edition)
- Parks & Recreation Department—Forestry Tree Work Permit Application
- ANSI A300 Part 8—Root Management
- ANSI A300 Part 5—Management of Trees and Shrubs During Site Planning, Site Development, and Construction
- Public Works—Governing Specifications (latest version)

Restitution

Restitution for damage to public property trees within city sponsored projects will be sought by Parks Forestry for any reason outlined within this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). An invoice for the restitution amount including any labor/materials, loss of future benefits, stump removal and new tree planting (as necessary) will be sent by Parks Forestry directly to the Contractor responsible for the project.



Parks Forestry will utilize the *International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), Council of Tree & Landscape Appraisers—Guide for Plant Appraisal (latest edition)* and *Minnesota Society of Arboriculture—Supplement to the Guide for Plant Appraisal (ISA) (latest edition)* to determine the appraised value of a tree, dependent upon the circumstances as detailed in this SOP.

The Contractor is responsible for payment in full of any invoices for tree damages prior to close out and final payment of the project.

Example Tree Appraisal

Tree Appraisal

City of Saint Paul
Department of Parks and Recreation-Forestry

Date: 4/10/2026
Address: [REDACTED]
City, State, Zip Code: [REDACTED]
Project: [REDACTED]
Description: Construction Removal

Tree Information

Scientific Name	<i>Quercus rubra</i>
Common Name	Oak, Northern Red
DBH (in inches)	17
Tree Location	Front 1
Planting Location	Boulevard
Unit Cost \$/sq.in.	\$24.00
Species Class adjustment	70%
Condition Class adjustment	81%
Location Class adjustment	67%
Circumference Damaged	100%
Percent Valuation	100%

Labor and Replacement

Labor & Equipment Cost	\$0.00
Bill or Repair	\$0.00
Tree Benefits Lost	\$1,357.61
Replacement Cost	\$0.00

Amount Due \$3,404.41

Boulevard oak tree removal due to new private property construction, [REDACTED]. Property to remove tree and stump via an approved Forestry Tree Work Permit. Billing for the appraised value of the tree and tree benefits lost. Property is responsible for planting a new tree per the DSI approved plans via the Forestry Tree Work Permit and its Terms & Conditions. If a tree is not planted, property owner will be billed accordingly for Forestry to plant a new tree.

The valuation for a tree 7" DBH or greater is calculated following the trunk formula method of tree appraisal with regional tree values assigned following the latest edition of the Minnesota Supplement to the Guide for Plant Appraisal (2009). The value for a tree 6" DBH or less is calculated by multiplying the diameter in inches by \$125.00.

Date: 4/10/2026
Bill To: [REDACTED]
Billing Code: [REDACTED]
Forestry Contact: Brianna Bacher



Notification of Damage

The Project Manager or Contractor will contact Parks Forestry immediately should any public property tree meant to be preserved incur damage during the Pre-Construction, Construction, and Boulevard Restoration/Tree Planting phases of a project.

Failure to Notify—Additional Monitoring Required:

Should damage occur and not be addressed immediately, additional monitoring may be required. Parks Forestry may pursue restitution at a later date, within two years of damage, if the condition of a tree declines due to construction damage, has been found to be infected with a pathogen, or has become infested by damaging insects due to unreported damage or stress resulting from construction activities.

Damage to Trees—Removal Required

If a tree designated for preservation is removed or is damaged to the extent that removal is required, as determined by Parks Forestry, restitution will be pursued in accordance with this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). This applies when removal occurs or is necessitated:

- Due to negligence or error.
- Due to unapproved root cutting or root removal methods that jeopardize the health or structural stability of the tree.
- Without an approved *Forestry Tree Work Permit*.

Damage to Trees—Removal not Required

In the event that a public property tree is damaged during construction, but does not require removal, Parks Forestry will work with the Project Manager and Contractor to determine the corrective action necessary within two workdays.

Above Ground Damage:

Restitution or corrective measures for damages to any part of a tree above ground will follow the procedures as detailed below.



- **Trunk Damage:** Should the main trunk of the tree incur damage from operating construction equipment, or from improperly stored equipment or construction spoils in the tree protection zone, the restitution process will be followed.
- **Canopy Damage:** Should any part of the tree's canopy be damaged by construction equipment, Parks Forestry will first assess to determine whether subsequent removal is required. If so, the restitution process will be followed.
- **Corrective Pruning:** If damage is limited and can be addressed with corrective pruning, Parks Forestry will work with the Project Manager and Contractor to determine which party will complete the pruning and within what timeframe.
 - **Pruning by Parks Forestry:** Parks Forestry will complete all corrective pruning in accordance with ANSI A300 pruning standards and will invoice the Contractor directly for labor and equipment at current rates.
 - **Pruning by Contractor:** The Contractor must obtain an approved *Forestry Tree Work Permit* before completing any pruning and, once approved, will complete all pruning within the agreed upon timeframe. If the Contractor does not complete the pruning within that timeframe, Parks Forestry will complete the work and invoice the Contractor at current rates.

If the Contractor's pruning does not meet ANSI A300 standards, Parks Forestry will remove any branch stubs resulting from improper methods in accordance with ANSI A300 and will invoice the Contractor at current rates. If pruning results in flush cuts or removal of limbs not approved via permit, Parks Forestry will follow the restitution process and may, at its discretion, require tree removal.

Subsurface Damage:

Pursuant to Ordinance 25-4, the following definitions are applicable to this section:

Critical root zone (CRZ): Area of soil around a tree where the minimum amount of roots considered critical to the structural stability or health of the tree are located. Determination of CRZ will be based on the trunk diameter method as defined in this ordinance.

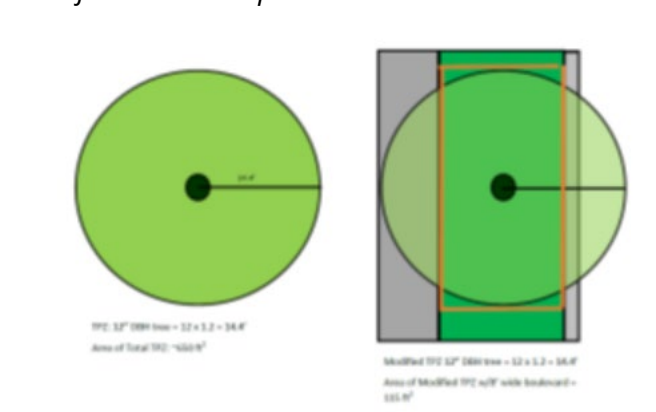
Tree protection zone (TPZ): A defined area within which certain activities are prohibited or restricted to prevent or minimize potential injury to designated trees, especially during construction or development. For purposes of this ordinance, the TPZ shall be the critical root zone unless such a TPZ would prohibit intended construction activities. In that case,



modified tree protection zones may be specified by Forestry based on specific site restrictions.

Modified TPZ: A TPZ that is adjusted in size or shape to accommodate the existing infrastructure, planned construction, and specific aspects of the site, as well as the canopy conformation, visible root orientation, size, condition, maturity, and species response to construction impacts.

Modified TPZ example



Trunk diameter method: A method used to locate the tree protection zone boundary as a radius in feet from the center of a tree's trunk by multiplying the diameter at breast height (DBH), measured in inches at 4.5 feet from the ground, by a factor of 1.2.

Root Cutting:

Pursuant to Ordinance 25-4, Parks Forestry will be contacted prior to the severance of any root 2 inches in diameter or larger.

Should tree roots two (2) inches in diameter or larger be cut without first contacting Parks Forestry, Parks Forestry will determine whether tree removal is required due to structural stability concerns. If a tree that is intended to be preserved requires removal due to structural instability resulting from root severance, the Contractor will be responsible for its removal via the *Forestry Tree Work Permit* process and for restitution of the appraised value of the tree.



Should tree roots be cut using unapproved methods, Parks Forestry will inspect the site and determine what corrective measures are necessary. Parks Forestry will work with the Project Manager and Contractor to complete remediation within one workday of the date of the damage. Remediation may include, but is not limited to, cleanly cutting affected roots, covering impacted roots with four (4) inches of mulch or clean soil, and supplemental watering of the affected tree.

Soil Disturbance and Compaction:

Should construction impact the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) of a public tree in the form of soil compaction, due to improperly stored materials/equipment, or use of heavy equipment within the TPZ without adequate ground cover, the Contractor will be responsible for remediation of the area. This may include radial trenching (to be performed by a licensed tree care company) and the addition of organic material. Parks Forestry will determine what corrective measures are necessary, and work with the Project Manager and Contractor to remediate the damage prior to the project's completion.

Forestry Tree Work Permit

Permit Requirements/Restrictions:

No City department or contractor of the City shall engage in any tree-related activity within public rights-of-way, parklands or parkways without first obtaining a *Forestry Tree Work Permit* from Parks Forestry. A *Forestry Tree Work Permit* application submitted by any company or organization lacking a City of Saint Paul "Tree Trimmer" license issued under Legislative Code Chap. 362 will not be approved.

Corrective Pruning:

Pruning the canopy, crown or living foliage of a tree, in strict accordance with ANSI A-300 Standards and best management practices, as determined by Parks Forestry, may be allowed with an approved *Forestry Tree Work Permit*. The permit's specifications shall be adhered to unless modified in writing by Parks Forestry prior to any change from the original permit specifications.



A Forestry Tree Work Permit will not be granted for tree pruning more than 25 percent of the canopy, crown, or living foliage of a tree or other pruning not in accordance with the ANSI A-300 Standards.

Tree Removal:

The removal of any public tree meant to be preserved shall not be removed prior to receipt of written authorization from Parks Forestry in the form of a Forestry Tree Work permit. Failure to secure a permit prior to a tree's removal may result in the Contractor paying the appraised value of the tree removed as evidence of the need for removal will not have been reviewed in advance by Parks Forestry.

Permit Review:

Upon receipt of a complete application for a Forestry Tree Work Permit, Parks Forestry will review the application which may include a field inspection of the site.

- Parks Forestry will inform the permit applicant of their decision to approve or deny the permit application no later than ten (10) business days following receipt of the application if the application is complete.
- Permit applications deemed incomplete will be returned with instructions to provide additional information when resubmitting the permit application.