

PARK DISTRICT OF OAK PARK

Tree Removal Fact Sheet

Summary

The Park District of Oak Park is committed to responsible stewardship of trees within our park system. This responsibility encompasses not just the prudent care and nurturing of the trees as a valuable nature resource, but also the judicious removal of trees that have reached the end of their natural lives or have become dangerously weakened by insects, disease, or damage.

Discussion

Trees are an important component of the environment that provide shade to buildings and people, food and refuge for birds and other animals, and act as air purification systems. However, due to age, damage, disease, or decay trees can negatively impact public safety. Examples of this negative impact include any tree infected, infested, or dead resulting from Emerald Ash Borer activity, Dutch elm disease, or other injurious insects or diseases. Decay-causing fungi can enter tree wounds and become established in the tree's interior, compromising the strength of its wood. Storm damage can destroy more than 50% of the tree's canopy in one event, leaving a tree dangerously weakened. Trees weakened by disease, insect activity, or storms can send branches crashing down unexpectedly onto well-traveled walkways or play areas. Our trees are carefully monitored for all of these conditions. Trees found to be structurally unsound are scheduled for removal as a matter of public safety.

The Park District has three arborists on staff certified by the International Society of Arboriculture who are trained to identify problem trees. Additionally, the Park District consults with a master arborist and the Village of Oak Park Superintendent of Forestry as needed regarding the health and safety of our tree population.

What are the signs of potential hazards?

- Large dead or detached branches
- Cavities, holes, or decayed wood
- Signs of internal decay, such as mushrooms at the base of the tree or carpenter ants
- Cracks or splits in the trunk where branches are attached
- Many branches arising from one point on the trunk
- Roots that have been cut or covered

If you suspect a tree in one of our parks to be dangerous, please contact the Park District of Oak Park at www.pdop.org or 708.725.2000.

