



PEACOCK

TREE CONSULTANCY

How tree owners should manage their trees



A short guide: four scenarios

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Residential property
with one large tree
within falling distance
of a busy highway

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Local Government
Organisation

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Private woodland
adjoining a busy public
right of way

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Large estate property
with paying visitors

1 Residential property with one large tree within falling distance of a busy highway

Type of inspection

Informal inspections are required by the landowner, e.g. while going about day-to-day general maintenance and care of the house and garden. If problems are detected, or anything unusual is observed about the tree, the owner must arrange for a detailed inspection by an arboriculturist.

Frequency of inspection

The inspections must be periodic, however, there is no regular set frequency to the process.

Levels of competency

A reasonable and prudent landowner is expected to have some degree of knowledge and experience of the trees on their land, which is therefore a suitable level of competency. However, if the landowner has a lack of knowledge or capacity to carry out the inspections, they must arrange for an inspection by an arboriculturist with suitable qualifications, experience and professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

Record-keeping

There is no requirement formally to document the inspections. However, it is beneficial to keep records of any correspondences and invoices for advice or work carried out.

2

Local Government Organisation

Type of inspection

Initially an overall assessment of the trees in the borough must be undertaken to identify the levels of risk and inform zoning of areas according to level of use. Formal inspections are required for all individual trees in the borough, through ground based visual checks either on foot or drive-by inspections.

Inspections on foot are mostly a quick visual inspection, stopping for a closer look at the bigger, older trees which are more likely to have problems. Drive-by inspections are to be conducted at an appropriate speed (to maximise the chances of identifying tree hazards) and limited to purely trees (i.e. not including potholes, road signs etc).

All tree stock within the borough boundaries are to be incorporated, including highways, parks, housing, schools and cemeteries. However, privately owned trees are not to be included unless they are within falling distance of the highway.

Frequency of inspection

Trees are to be inspected on a regular frequency based on their location, species, size, age and condition. The maximum period of time between inspections must not exceed five years. Professional arboriculturists are required for setting of inspection frequencies.

Levels of competency

Tree officers conducting formal inspections must be qualified to a minimum of national Qualification framework level 3 (equivalent to a technician's certificate) and hold the Lantra Basic Tree Survey and Inspection qualification. A system must be in place for obtaining specialist arboricultural assistance where issues arise which are outside the knowledge of the tree inspector.

Professional qualifications required for setting of inspection frequencies and providing specialist assistance, i.e. to level 6 Professional Diploma and Lantra Professional Tree Inspection qualification. The arboriculturist must also have an in-depth knowledge of wood decaying fungi and

the identification and interpretation of signs and symptoms of ill health and structural failure across a wide range of tree species and circumstances.

Record-keeping

A tree risk management plan is required to demonstrate the council has taken a reasonable approach to protect those who are reasonably likely to be affected by their trees. An inventory of tree stock must be kept, together with records of all tree inspections, including details of any works carried out. The records must be kept using computer software system designed for the purpose.

3 Private woodland adjoining a busy public right of way

Type of inspection

The woodland owner is required to undertake regular informal inspections of trees within falling distance of the public right of way. If problems are detected, or anything unusual is observed about the trees, the owner must arrange for a detailed inspection by an arboriculturist. Other areas of the woodland are remote and only likely to contain people exercising their right to roam (whereby they must accept a greater level of risk to themselves). Therefore a more reactive, informal inspection regime is appropriate, dealing with serious problems as they arise (e.g. collapsing/uprooting trees).

Frequency of inspection

Initially a formal inspection of the trees is to be completed by a person with basic qualifications in arboriculture, i.e. Lantra Basic Tree Survey and Inspection. Trees within falling distance of the public right of way are to be inspected informally on a maximum cycle of every five years by the woodland owner. If problems are detected, or anything unusual is observed about the trees, the owner must arrange for a detailed inspection by an arboriculturist.

Levels of competency

The woodland owner is expected to have some degree of knowledge and experience of the trees on their land, e.g. able to identify the most common tree species and recognise the obvious signs that a tree might be hazardous.

Formal inspections are to be completed by a person with basic qualifications (minimum: Lantra Basic Tree Survey and Inspection), plus knowledge and experience in arboriculture. Professional qualifications required for detailed inspections are to the minimum level of Lantra Professional Tree Inspection qualification.

Record-keeping

The results of the tree inspections are to be kept in a file, together with records of any detailed inspections by an arboriculturist, and notes for any work carried out.

4

Large estate property with paying visitors

Type of inspection

A proactive formal approach is needed, therefore initially an overall assessment of the trees in the estate must be undertaken to identify the levels of risk and inform zoning of areas according to level of usage. Inspections are to be conducted on foot, through a quick visual check, stopping for a closer look at the bigger, older trees that are more likely to have problems.

Areas with a high use (e.g. highways, car parks, children's playgrounds etc) and areas with medium levels of usage (e.g. well-used routes, buildings, gardens, farms etc), require regular formal inspections from employees.

Other areas of the estate (e.g. infrequently used woodlands, grasslands etc) are to be inspected on an informal basis e.g. observations made by site staff while going about day-to-day general maintenance and care of the estate. If problems are detected, or anything unusual is observed about the tree(s), the site staff must report the issue to the site manager, whereby he will undertake a formal inspection.

There must be a system to obtain specialist arboricultural assistance where issues arise which are outside the knowledge of the tree site manager.

If large events are held at the estate, keep visitors away from the bigger, older trees which are more likely to have problems. Close the estate grounds during periods of extreme weather.

Frequency of inspection

Inspect high-use areas every 21 months. Inspect medium-use areas every three years. All other areas (informal inspections) must not exceed five-yearly intervals. Conduct a formal inspection before all large events at the estate.

Levels of competency

Employees undertaking formal inspections must have basic qualifications in arboriculture (i.e. Lantra Basic Tree Survey and Inspection) and also general levels of tree knowledge, with an ability to recognise obvious visible signs of ill health or significant structural problems. Staff undertaking

informal observations are expected to be able to identify the most common tree species and recognise the obvious signs that a tree might be hazardous, however, no formal qualifications are necessary.

The arboriculturist conducting detailed inspections must have qualifications to the minimum level of Lantra Professional Tree Inspection. The arboriculturist must also have suitable arboricultural experience (e.g. an in-depth knowledge of wood decaying fungi and the identification and interpretation of signs and symptoms of ill health and structural failure across a wide range of tree species and circumstances), plus professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

Record-keeping

Keep the results of all inspections in a file, together with records of any detailed inspections by an arboriculturist and note of the remedial work carried out. The site manager shall also keep records of any trees reported and action taken.

Prioritisation of work

Where possible carry out all recommended works within the specified time scales. However, sometimes for economic and other practical reasons work may not be completed precisely on time. Where this is the case, higher occupancy areas and high priority trees will take precedence over lower occupancy areas.

Selected references

National Tree Safety Group (2011). Common Sense Risk Management of Trees (Forestry Commission)

UK Roads Liaison Group (2016). Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice (paragraph B.5.4)

*On line article by Barrell Tree Consultancy (2017), available at: <https://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/assets/Uploads/19-Micklewright-Legal-JB.pdf>
accessed on 12.02.20*

*On line article by Barrell Tree Consultancy (2017), available at: <https://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/assets/Uploads/22-Cavanagh-Legal-JB.pdf>
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Dowson D. Tree Inspections: The Need for a Defensible System



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