

Protecting our Urban Forest

Trees on City property are an asset that belong to the citizens of Saskatoon. Trees provide a neighbourhood with many benefits such as increased property values, shade, noise reduction, and protection from strong winds.



The City of Saskatoon's Urban Forestry section has been directed to maintain, protect, and preserve our city's urban forest. The purpose of these guidelines is to reduce the number of trees which are unnecessarily damaged or removed as a result of any construction activities.

YOU are responsible!

You are responsible for protecting City maintained trees near your construction site. Any unauthorized excavations, removal, relocation, pruning, or damage in part or whole of existing trees adjacent to your work site is not allowed and may result in a fine or penalty as per City Council Policy, #C09-011 entitled "Trees on Public Property" (1989) or the Parks Bylaw #7767, "The Management and Control of Parks, Boulevards, and Cemeteries of the City of Saskatoon" (1988). Restitution for damages to City trees will be assessed on the value of the plant material as well as the cost of any removal or repairs.



For more information:
Urban Forestry Branch
975-2537

Construction Near City Trees



Guidelines to prevent tree
damage in a
construction zone

DID YOU KNOW?

A mature boulevard tree can be worth more than \$15,000!



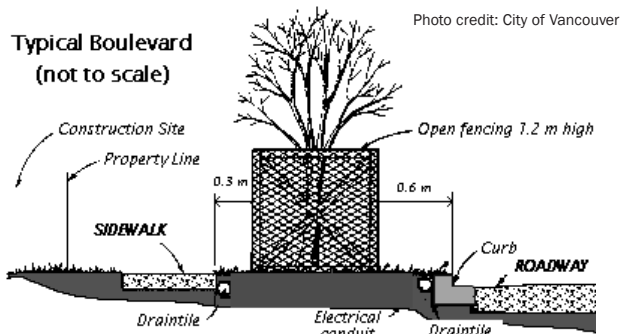
Preventing tree damage in a construction zone

1) Plan ahead

Equipment and vehicles can injure tree trunks, break branches, tear bark or damage roots. Construction damage may result in reducing the value of the tree or lead to the decline and death of a tree. Damage to trees is often irreversible, so it is important to take precautions near them. To avoid costly damage to City trees, contact the Urban Forestry Section at 975-2890 **before** you proceed with any construction near City trees. Certified arborists employed by the City are available to advise you about what is necessary to protect them.

2) Protective fencing and hoarding

The best way to avoid tree damage at construction sites is to set up a protective fence to act as a physical barrier to keep vehicles and equipment away from trees.



- For trees within 3-5 meters of construction, place a standard snow fence at the farthest possible distance from the tree(s).
- For trees within 1-3 meters of construction, use 12.5 mm (1/2") thick plywood sheeting, 1220 mm (48") in height, enclosing tree(s) at the farthest possible distance from trees.

- For trees within 1 meter of construction, use 39 X 89 X 2400 mm (2" X 4" by 8' long) boards secured vertically at 300 mm (12") intervals around the tree trunk with strapping or an equivalent method of securing the boards.

3) Protecting tree roots

Severing major tree roots can impact both the health and stability of a tree. It may be months or years before the tree declines so it is critical to ensure that proper protection is used to protect trees' roots.

THE CRITICAL ROOT ZONE AREA IS WITHIN THE DRIP LINE OF THE TREE. If you were to extend a line straight down from the outer most branches of a tree this would be the drip line of the tree.



4) Do not pile or leave fill near the tree trunk

Since most roots are located in the upper 30 cm of the soil, piling soil over them or changing the grade near an established tree will reduce water infiltration and air exchange around the roots. Even a few centimeters of change in the grade can damage tree roots and injure or kill a tree.

5) Digging around trees

Excavations within 3.0 meters of a tree:

- You will only be permitted to excavate on one side of the tree.
- All exposed roots must be pruned with a

sharp pruning tool to provide a clean severance of the root.

- Exposed roots must be protected from drying out during construction by placing a tarp over the excavation wall during construction.
- Backfill around the roots as soon as possible.

Excavations beyond 3.0 meters of a City tree:

- At construction sites where there is excavation beyond 3.0 meters of a City tree, you are required to backfill around the roots as soon as possible to prevent exposed roots from drying out.

6) Prevent compaction under the drip line of a tree

Transporting, handling or the storing of building or construction material around trees may compact soil around the root zone and is detrimental to the health of a tree. Compaction inhibits root growth and reduces the oxygen roots require to function.

To prevent compaction of the root zone, place wood chip mulch 15 cm (6") in depth within the drip line of the tree and 10 cm (4") from the trunk.

7) Water

Adequate water is critical to maintain tree health. A slow soak over the entire root zone is preferred during and after construction.

Apply 100 mm of wood chip mulch, over the root system to keep the soil moist and the roots cool.

If the soil in the root zone has been compacted, aeration can improve conditions for oxygen supply and water uptake by the roots. Holes can be drilled in the ground, throughout the root zone of the tree. The depth should be at least 30 cm, but may need to be deeper if the soil grade is raised.