

Urban Forest Recovery, Guidance after a Major Storm Event

Do you have a tree on your property? Are you concerned your trees could have been impacted by the recent storms and may pose a risk?

Before deciding to remove a tree, it is vital to get a professional and accurate inspection performed by a qualified individual. It takes decades to grow a tree to maturity, so decisions about removing them should be well informed. A professional basic risk assessment can be obtained through a qualified arborist. A city-licensed arborist and a valid Tree Permit are required to prune or remove street trees within the public right-of-way. Since these areas vary from street to street, it is always important to verify if a tree may require a valid Tree Permit.

Below are recommendations which may assist you in your decision-making process:

Hire a Tree Service or Consultant with a qualified ISA Certified Arborist

- [A City-licensed Tree Service](#) meets minimum licensing criteria and is a good place to start. These companies are authorized to work on street trees with a valid Tree Permit. Qualifications of these companies vary, so verify inspection findings, ask questions, review recommendations, verify credentials and get a second opinion if needed. In addition, there are consulting arborists who specialize in providing professional and accurate advice for tree care.
- An International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist with a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification can provide a more advanced assessment. A higher-level risk assessment can be considered if needed. Typical risk assessments start at Level 1, which is a limited visual inspection from the ground. A higher level of inspection (Level 2-3) could include the use of advanced tools or an aerial inspection by a climber or observations from a bucket truck/lift.
- Consumer Due-diligence - Always ask for proof of company's credentials, how long have they been in business, are they city-licensed, bonded, and insured? Ask for proof of both arborist and risk assessment credentials (most carry their card in their wallet). Also review BBB ratings.
- Be aware of unprofessional tactics and possible scams. If someone tells you your tree is a "hazard", hollow, or diseased/infested, ask them to explain in detail (what insect or pathogen) and get a second opinion if needed. There are many reputable companies, and it doesn't hurt to get a second opinion.

Review Findings and Make an informed Decision

- Review findings and recommendations and consult multiple companies.
- Consider mitigation and pruning instead, if possible. Risk can be lowered by moving possible targets (what the tree could impact/damage) and deadwood and structural pruning to mitigate defects. Part of the tree could be considered to remain for wildlife habitat.
- Consider benefits lost to your property, neighborhood and city - Do you know what one 25 inch diameter mature ponderosa pine can do?
 - It will intercept 2,138 gallons of stormwater runoff per year
 - It will reduce atmospheric carbon by 562 pounds per year
 - It will conserve 134 Kilowatt/hours of electricity for cooling per year
 - Healthy, well cared for trees increase property and neighborhood values up to 15%



Check out some of the benefits your specific trees are providing by using the National Tree Benefit Calculator at <https://www.arborday.org/calculator/index.cfm>

For more information about trees and their care, visit www.SpokaneUrbanForestry.org or call 509-363-5495.