

## **Case Study: The Price for Improper Tree Pruning**

### **Background**

Recently, a hospital in the Mid-Levels has been fined over HK\$200,000 by the Lands Department for pruning a Chinese banyan tree improperly and excessively in order to give way to the hospital's new extension.

Although prior approval for tree pruning had been granted from the department, the actual scale of pruning was beyond what had been proposed. As a result, the hospital was in breach of the Tree Preservation Clause in the land lease and was subjected to the penalty.

Though the hospital has to pay a substantial price for the improper pruning, the damage to the tree is irreversible. The department ordered the hospital to stop further pruning in the next 12 months in that hope that it would recover. The hospital was also required to monitor the health and stability of all trees in the site.

### **Lessons Learnt**

The case reveals the lack of knowledge in proper pruning. The malpractice on tree works which could have been prevented if the following actions had been taken.

1. To protect trees and complete tree works in accordance to the Lands Administration Office Practice Note 7/2007 and General Guidelines on Tree Pruning, and other information on pruning by the Development Bureau.
2. To engage a competent landscape contractor or personnel to carry out the work and monitor the tree works.
3. Do not prune more than 20% of the tree at any one time. In addition, the following improper pruning must be avoided at all times:



Lion Tailing



Over lifting



Topping



Stub remaining



Large Pruning Cut



Flush Cut

### **More Information**

For more information on proper tree management, in particular that of pruning, please visit the Development Bureau's Greening website on 'Tree Maintenance and Management'. [http://www.greening.gov.hk/en/management/tree\\_m\\_and\\_m.html](http://www.greening.gov.hk/en/management/tree_m_and_m.html)

**Tree Management Office**  
**Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section**  
**Development Bureau**  
**July 2011**