

Minimising Tree Risks

Why is tree maintenance important?

Proper tree maintenance contributes to the healthy growth and good form of trees. Healthy and structurally stable trees are valuable assets to our environment.

Many tree failures are triggered by poor tree maintenance such as improper pruning, topping, damage to the root system and other malpractices in tree care. Tree failures could cause injury and loss of human lives and damage to properties.

Trees are living organisms and their condition may change with time. Owners should inspect trees within their premises at least once a year and take appropriate measures before the onset of the wet season. Routine tree maintenance works should be carried out by a competent landscape service provider or an arborist/ tree specialist.

Preliminary maintenance inspections

The primary purpose of preliminary maintenance inspections is to identify the need for tree maintenance works. Property owners as well as property management or maintenance staff could carry out such preliminary maintenance inspections and seek professional advice as necessary.

In carry out preliminary maintenance inspections, you should check a tree for any of the following signs and take appropriate action (see 'Pictorial Guide for Tree Maintenance to Reduce Tree Risks').

1. Leaning



2. Dieback twigs/ dead branches/ hangers



3. Cracks/ splits/ wood decay/ cavities



4. Fungal fruiting bodies



5. Severely cut/ damaged roots



6. Topping/ improper pruning

Who is responsible?

Property owners are responsible for trees within their lots. Property owners may also be liable under specific lease conditions for the maintenance of trees within or adjoining their lot.

If your building is held in multiple ownership, it is preferable for the Owners Corporation to coordinate the maintenance of the trees for which you are collectively responsible. If you need further advice on how to set up an Owners' Corporation, please consult your nearest District Office.

How to reduce Tree Risks?

Depending on the identified tree risks, abatement measures may include:

- Restricting access;
- Removal or relocating the objects that may be hit by a fallen tree/ branch;
- Monitoring tree and/or site conditions;
- Appropriate pruning;
- Cabling, bracing and propping; and
- Tree removal (In case of any defective tree or dead tree requiring the removal, the tree owner should follow the requirements stipulated in the lease conditions where applicable.)

What would happen if I did not maintain my trees?

If a tree is not well maintained, it will deteriorate and a tree failure may occur. This could result in injury to persons or damage to properties. If this happens, you may have to incur great expense to repair property and to compensate the victims.

Information on Tree Management

Information on tree management is available at <https://www.greening.gov.hk/en/tree-care/information-about-tree-maintenance-for-private-pro/index.html>.

Enquiry

To enquire about tree management work or report suspected problematic trees, please call 1823 or e-mail (tellme@1823.gov.hk) or through Mobile Apps (Tell me@1823).