

Guidelines from the City and County of San Francisco



Dear San Francisco Resident

You are receiving this notice from the Department of Public Works. Below and on our website, you will find recommendations for your tree(s) proper care and maintenance. Following **these guidelines** will help keep trees strong, healthy and beautiful; increase public safety; and help you avoid fines or costly maintenance issues later. Healthy trees provide environmental and health benefits, raise property values, provide wild-life habitat, and beautify our city. Your good stewardship of your tree helps the entire City's tree ecosystem!



DPW recommends consulting a professional before altering your tree. You can find a certified arborist at the International Society of Arboriculture's website: www.isa-arbor.com. Click "Find a Tree Care Service."



Local companies that carry tree maintenance supplies include:

(This list is not comprehensive and is provided for your convenience. No recommendation is implied.)

Sloat Garden Center (415) 752-1614, www.sloatgardens.com

The Urban Farmer Store (415) 661-2204, www.urbanfarmerstore.com

Flora Grubb Gardens (415) 626-7256, www.floragrubb.com

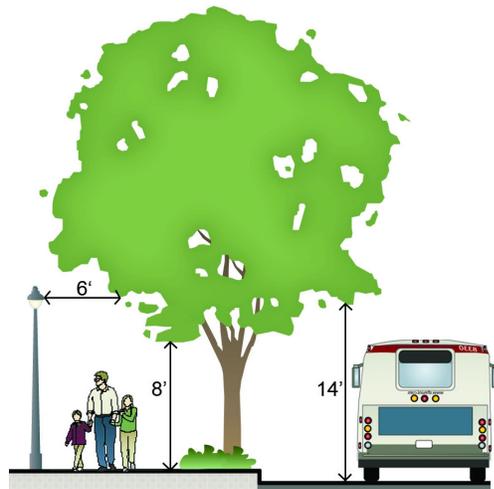
Flowercraft (415) 824-1900, www.flowercraftgc.com

Mature Tree Care Basics

Section 805, of Article 16 of the Public Works Code of the City and County of San Francisco makes it the responsibility of the property owner to maintain street trees adjacent to their property.

Visibility

Traffic lights, stop signs, and street lights should be clearly visible.



Pruning

- Please remember that trees in San Francisco are protected by ordinance and cannot be excessively pruned. The city has adopted pruning standards that must be adhered to for all trees located in the public right of way.
- The city recommends hiring a certified arborist for any tree pruning. Proper pruning will not only ensure your tree is healthy, but will actually reduce your maintenance requirements.
- For more information on pruning standards visit our website. Excessive pruning of street trees can result in a fine!

Soil Basins

- Soil level should be flush with the sidewalk. Basins that are too low can increase risk of tripping and collect litter. If tree roots are exposed, add soil until they are covered and fill the rest with decomposed granite.
- Basin soil levels that are too high can be damaging if the trunk is buried, which can contribute to crown rot, and eventually cause the tree to decline. Please ensure that there is no soil mounded around the trunk or root area of the tree and remove extra soil down to the sidewalk grade if needed.

For more information about tree care and maintenance, visit us at www.sfdpw.org and click on Trees under Services A-Z or call us at (415) 554-7336.

Young Tree Care Basics

Caring for a young tree will not only ensure that it remains healthy and in good condition, but will reduce your maintenance requirements later.

Watering

Water must saturate slowly into the soil with at least 15 gallons per tree at least once per week for three to five years.



Staking (Tree Supports)

Adjust and replace stakes and ties as needed. Stakes should support the tree upright, allowing movement, but not so much that the tree grows into a lean. Be sure the ties are not too tight to avoid “girdling.” Check to make sure the tree is strongly rooted and doesn’t move around before you remove stakes and ties.

Pruning

Establish good structure by pruning the tree when it is young to train it for clearance over the sidewalk and roadway. This will help prevent damage from vehicles.

Weeding

Keep tree basins free of weeds. Don’t plant flowers until three to five years after planting.

Permits

Tree and Landscape Permits

Permits are required before trees can be planted or removed in the public right-of-way. Any tree, whether alive or dead requires a permit for removal. We also offer permits for landscaping in the sidewalk. Visit our website for more information.

Empty Tree Basins - Empty tree basins can be tripping hazards for pedestrians. If there is an empty tree basin adjacent to your property, you will need to file a retroactive removal or tree planting permit application and submit it to the Department of Public Works.

Dead or Dying Trees - Dead or dying trees in the public right-of-way are not only unsightly, they can be potentially hazardous. The Public Works Code requires that any tree in the public right of way must be permitted for removal. Please download the tree removal permit application at www.sfdpw.org and send it in to the PO Box on the application. Our staff will work with you to expedite the permit process in order to remove a dead tree.



Protected trees located on private property

The Public Works Code also protects certain trees on private property. Trees labeled “Significant trees” by the public works code are trees located on private property that are within 10’ of the public right-of-way, and meet one or more of the following size requirements: diameter of 12’ or greater, height of 20’ or taller, or canopy width of 15’ or greater. Significant trees require a permit for removal, and must be pruned according to city standards. Landmark trees are afforded the highest protection of any tree, and must be approved by the Board of Supervisors. Landmark trees are listed on the DPW website.