

SAN DIEGO REGIONAL URBAN FORESTS COUNCIL

CLEARANCE STANDARDS FOR TREES SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA 2010

1 CLEARANCE STANDARDS

1.1 Purpose

It is the intention that all work be performed to improve public safety, reduce the spread of fire, provide required clearances, reduce the risk of tree failure, maintain or improve tree vigor and structure, or fulfill other specific requirements of the tree owner.

1.2 Application

The following standards shall apply to the pruning of all trees in San Diego County maintained as part of a landscaped setting. These standards are not intended to supersede any more stringent clearance requirements of any fire department or other governmental agencies having jurisdiction.

1.3 Additional Standards

Additional standards and practices that apply to the pruning of trees shall be the most recent edition of the following:

ANSI A-300 (Part 1), American National Standard for Tree Care Operations – Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Management – Standard Practices (Pruning)

ANSI Z133.1, American National Standard for Arboricultural Operations – Safety Requirements

“Best Management Practices – Tree Pruning” published by the International Society of Arboriculture.

1.4 Clearance Standards

The following minimum clearances for tree canopies are to be achieved at the time of pruning.

1.4.1 streets, roads, fire lanes and the traveled way in parking lots: 14’ above the curb or edge of the traveled way.

1.4.2 driveways: 14’ overhead clearance and 16’ horizontal clearance (8’ from either side of the centerline of the driveway). Local agency requirements may specify a greater horizontal clearance depending on the number of properties accessed by the driveway.

1.4.3 buildings and structures: 3’ from the sides and 5’ over the roof.

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1.4.4 chimneys: 10' from the side or above the outlets from chimneys or flue pipes.

1.4.5 safety signs, signals and informational road signs: Line of sight, as detailed in local codes or ordinances, shall not be obstructed by tree growth from a clear view by motor vehicle operators. This includes street name signs and property addresses.

1.4.6 vehicle traffic at intersections and turning lanes: Line of sight, as detailed in local codes or ordinances, shall not be obstructed by tree growth from a clear view by motor vehicle operators.

1.4.7 street lights and light poles: 5' from the sides, above and below the light fixture and the pole supporting the fixture.

1.4.8 sidewalks, walkways and parking spaces in parking lots: 8' above the paved surface.

2 PRUNING

2.1 Pruning Objectives

The objectives to be achieved include, but are not limited to clearance, risk reduction and structural improvement or correction.

2.2 Pruning Methods (types)

One or more of the following methods (types) shall be utilized to achieve the objectives: clean, raise, reduce or thin. Do not top any tree to achieve the clearance standards.

2.3 Work Included

Tree pruning shall include clearance pruning along with any other pruning specified or required to complete the work.

2.4 Inspection

“A visual hazard assessment, including a root collar inspection, shall be performed prior to climbing, entering, or performing any work in a tree.” (ANSI Z133.1-2006)

Report to the tree manager or tree owner, in writing, any unsafe or potentially hazardous condition. Also report if it was not possible to inspect the root collar due to obstructing plant material or soil.

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