

## HIRING AN ARBORIST

It is best to hire a professional arborist if:

- tree limbs are large or cannot be safely reached,
- pruning involves the use of power equipment or
- pruning is needed near power lines.

When selecting an arborist, consider their credentials, such as:

- membership in professional organizations, as in the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), National Arborist Association or American Society of Consulting Arborists,
- certification through the ISA Certified Arborist program,
- proof of insurance, and
- a list of references.

City of Sugar Land

Public Works Department

P.O. Box 110

Sugar Land, TX 77487-0110

281-275-2450



To ensure public safety in rights-of-way, the City of Sugar Land has tree trimming requirements. A right-of-way is a public space that needs to be maintained free and clear of any obstructions. The City's tree trimming ordinance is designed to improve visibility of stop signs, traffic signals, street name signs and other items related to public safety.



## TREE TRIMMING ORDINANCE ENSURES PUBLIC SAFETY



## PROPERTY OWNERS MUST KEEP PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY FREE OF OVERHANGING BRANCHES PER CITY ORDINANCE.



All trees and limbs growing in or near a right-of way must be trimmed to the regulated height stated by City ordinance.

“Where the tree overhangs a residential street, there must be a clear space under the tree that is 12 feet above the street surface and 8 feet above the sidewalk surface.”

“Where the tree overhangs a nonresidential street, there must be a clear space under the tree that is 14 feet above the street surface and 8 feet above the sidewalk surface.”

To find out more about your maintenance responsibilities, contact your homeowner association or call the City’s Public Works Department at 281-275-2450.

## Compliance

If a resident does not comply, the violation is turned over to Code Enforcement for action, which may include a municipal court citation.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PRUNE ALONG CITY STREETS?

Trees are a valuable asset to properties and the environment. In many parts of the city, Sugar Land’s tree canopy provides shade and significantly reduces utility bills. Mature healthy trees can increase a property’s value by as much as 25 percent.

Trees must be properly maintained and pruned for the health of the tree as well as for public safety. The City’s tree trimming ordinance was put in place to ensure that large vehicles such as fire trucks, school buses, ambulances and garbage trucks are able to navigate and operate safely.

Overhanging tree limbs can delay emergency vehicles when seconds make the difference between life and death. Clearance is also essential for the visibility of traffic signs and signals. Untrimmed trees can cause irreversible damage to trucks.

There are many online resources for information on pruning trees.

- **International Society of Arboriculture**  
[www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com)
- **Fort Bend Master Gardeners**  
[www.fbmjg.com](http://www.fbmjg.com)
- **The National Arbor Day Foundation**  
[www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org)
- **Texas A&M University**  
[aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu)
- **Houston Area Urban Forestry Council**  
[www.haufc.org](http://www.haufc.org)

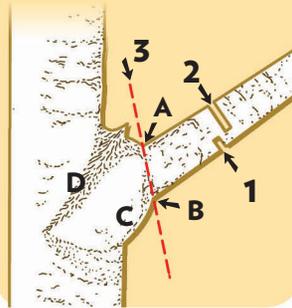
## TREE PRUNING TIPS

Many property owners can safely trim lower branches. For large limbs and those that cannot be reached safely, please hire a professional arborist.

- Use the proper tools, and keep them clean and sharp.
- Remove any branches that interfere with streets, sidewalks or routine maintenance such as mowing.
- Try to maintain a trunk without branches for the first 10 to 15 feet off the ground. Trim competing ones for greater control of the tree.
- Prune any broken, diseased or dead branches.
- When making your final cut on a branch, cut on the outside edge of the branch collar so that the natural defense chemicals that protect the tree are not removed.
- Remove any branch sprouts or suckers that are growing from the base of the tree in the late summer.
- Prune in late winter when trees are dormant. With spring growth following soon after, fresh wounds are exposed for the shortest time.
- Dressing the tree wound is not recommended, except in the months of April, May and June to prevent oak wilt infection.

Correct pruning cuts should be made as close as possible to the branch collar. Do not cut behind the branch bark ridge.

- 1 Undercut
- 2 Second cut
- 3 Final cut
- A+B Edge of Branch Collar
- C Branch collar
- D Branch bark ridge



Sugar Land picks up green waste such as brush and tree trimmings once a week. The City requires tree limbs to meet certain specifications. Tree limbs must not be longer than 4 feet in length and have a diameter of 4 inches or less or no longer than 2 feet in length with a diameter between 4 and 6 inches. Brush and tree limbs must be stacked in small piles (3 feet high and 3 feet wide). Bundling of tree limbs is not required, but appreciated.