

A300 TREE CARE STANDARDS

What are tree care “standards”?

- Standards are specific principles or criteria, established by authority or convention.
- Tree care standards are being developed by American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the primary US organization fostering the development of technology standards.
- ANSI is working along with representatives of the nursery, landscape, and tree care industries, as well as university researchers.
- Here are the standards currently available:
 - ANSI A300 Part 1:--Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance--Standard Practices (Pruning)
 - ANSI A300 Part 2:--Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance--Standard Practices (Fertilization)
 - ANSI A300 Part 3:--Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance--Standard Practices (Support Systems: Cabling, Bracing, and Guying)
 - ANSI A300 Part 4:--Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance--Standard Practices (Lightning Protection)

What good are these standards?

- To begin with, they **provide a uniform vocabulary** for tree care.
- The standards also **clarify the job** to be done, protecting both parties.
- In addition, using them will **promote good arboricultural practices**. Tree care terms and techniques are defined carefully, and their appropriate use is explained.

How do you use them?

- **These standards should be used in all relevant tree care contracts.**
- Anyone *contracting* for tree service, whether for private, corporate, institutional, or public trees, should add the following sentence to any agreement:
 - “Work to be done in compliance with the A300 Tree Care Standards”**
- Any one *supplying* tree service should write the bid using the standard terms in a standard manner (such as “cleaning” or “salt index”).
- Also, tree care professionals should follow the standards to demonstrate that they follow a specific and carefully considered program of tree management that is considered the norm for the industry.
- “Best Management Practices” booklets have been published by the **ISA** as aids in the interpretation and implementation of the ANSI A300 guidelines.

Where can I get more information?

To buy the standards, contact: **International Society of Arboriculture**, PO Box 3129, Champaign IL 61826-3129. Tel. (217) 355-9411, or **Tree Care Industry Association**, 3 Perimeter Road, Unit 1, Manchester, NH 03103. Tel. (800) 733-2622. Overview by Hilmann, Andy. 2000. “**ANSI A300.**” *City Trees*. 36:1. For other information, advice and help on this topic, call offices of your State Urban Forestry Coordinator or University Extension service, or visit urban forestry web sites.

Safety

Mowing Equipment

Power mowers are dangerous machines. The manufacturer has taken great strides in trying to make them as safe as possible, but any machine that small with a sharp blade rotating at high speed is inherently dangerous. Below are some safety rules that should be followed in order to ensure your safety and the safety of others.

- Debris can be picked up and thrown by the mower. Always check to see that the area to be mowed is debris-free.
- Before starting the mower, place one foot firmly on the mower deck and make sure the other is on solid ground, well away from the mower.
- Make sure that the catcher bag or deflector shield are firmly attached before starting.
- Clear the area of children and other onlookers before starting.
- Do not fill the mower with gasoline while it is running. Besides being dangerous, this practice will damage the grass in the area where the mower is left running.
- Always mow a slope on the sidehill; never up and down.
- Always push the mower in front; never pull it.
- Shut off the engine whenever someone approaches the mower.
- Disconnect the spark plug wire before working on the mower.
- Stay clear of hot mufflers.

Safety in Pruning

When pruning trees and shrubs you should be aware of safety procedures. Using common sense and simple precautions will eliminate potential safety hazards and reduce the likelihood of personal injury.

All overhead lines and cables should be considered energized (live) and should never be touched directly or indirectly. You should never work closer than 10 feet from any overhead line. Workers who prune trees for line clearance must be specially trained. If you are working within 10 feet of a line, a professional should be used. After damaging storms, damaged lines may energize metal conductors such as wire fences, at some distance. Special care is needed under these circumstances.

Eye protection apparatus is the most important basic safety procedure that should be used when mechanical tools are being used to complete the operation. Even when using hand tools, it is a good safety precaution to use safety glasses. Gloves are useful in order to reduce the likelihood of personal injury occurring by the pruning tools or trimmed branches. Boots and long pants should always be worn.

Carry brush and pruned branches away from the work area often in order to reduce trip hazards. A clean work area will enable you to move more efficiently and safely.

Safety

Chainsaw Safety (Info. from Lowes.com)

You won't find a tool with more power per inch than a chainsaw. With that power comes a need for extra attention to safety. All of the new and efficient safety features do not replace training in correct saw use, proper cutting technique, caution and common sense.

All tools should be used with caution. Chainsaws are no exception. They are powerful tools. A saw blade at full throttle moves at fifty miles per hour and commands extra attention to safety. Among the common safety features on homeowner saws are:

- Chain brake — stops the chain immediately if kickback occurs.
- Low-kickback chain — reduces the energy when kickback occurs.
- Bar tip guard/tip stabilizer — keeps the tip of the saw from touching the wood.
- Chain oiler — provides lubricant to the bar and chain to prevent overheating and binding.
- Hand guard — protects your hands from kickback.
- Throttle lockout trigger — keeps the motor idling but doesn't engage the chain.
- Stop switch — allows the operator to shut off the saw without letting go of the saw.
- Spark arrester — prevents exhaust from being a fire hazard.

All homeowner-sized saws are required to have chain brakes and anti kickback safety features. Some of the other features listed above are available only on gas-powered saws.

Safety and the Sawyer

Before you even think about cranking the saw and starting to cut, protect yourself. ALWAYS wear protective clothing, including:

- Leg protection such as chaps, leggings or cut resistant pants.
- Hard hat if there's any material overhead.
- Gloves or mittens with an enhanced gripping surface.
- Eye protection with side shields.
- Hearing protection such as earplugs or earmuffs.
- Boots or shoes with steel toes and nonskid soles.

Making the Cut

Felling is the act of cutting (or dropping) a tree. Look and look again at what you're going to be cutting - especially where it will fall. Always determine the angle the tree will fall and make the correct cuts. Falling trees tend to kick straight back. Plan a clear avenue to escape the falling tree, moving away from the trunk at an angle, not straight back. Clear debris that may cause you to trip.

Limbing and bucking is what you do to the tree you just dropped. Just because the tree is down don't let down your guard. Taking off the limbs (limbing) and cutting the tree into manageable pieces (bucking) still require caution. Always work on the uphill side when cutting. See how the tree is balanced and which way it will move if a supporting branch is cut. Take special care to avoid binding and kickback that can occur when the weight shifts. Binding and kickback are dangerous situations you face when cutting. In either case the operator loses control of the saw.

- Binding is caused when the material being cut clamps down and stalls the cutting chain inside of the kerf (or cut).
- Kickback occurs when the saw tip touches another object or the blade is pinched. The saw is thrown back towards the user. A saw cutting at full throttle can kick back in one-tenth of one second - faster than a person can react.

Safety

Do's and Don'ts

Above all, read the owner's manual carefully before operating a chainsaw. The following list is not all-inclusive, merely a reminder to keep safety first in your mind at all times.

Do

- Keep the cutting area clear of spectators and pets.
- Work with a partner if possible.
- Note any overhead hazards, including hanging tree limbs and utility lines.
- Keep the chain clean, sharp and lubricated.
- Be careful with fuel.
- Stay on the ground, don't cut from a ladder.
- Stand to the side when cutting.
- Cut at full throttle; bring the saw up to speed before starting cuts.
- Keep both hands on the saw handles.
- Let the saw come to a complete stop before reaching for the chain or blade.
- Buy the correct size and type of replacement chain and install it carefully according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- When running an electric saw, use a cord rated for outdoor use.
- Cut wood only. Dirt and rocks are not meant to touch the chain.
- Be careful with small branches - unweighted limbs may spring back when cut.
- Adjust the depth gauge setting every time you sharpen the chain.
- Maintain proper chain saw tension. A loose chain can come off the guide bar and strike the operator.

Don't

- DON'T touch a hot muffler.
- DON'T cut above chest height.
- DON'T use the bar for leverage, it's there to guide and support the cutting chain.
- DON'T bury the tip in the wood.
- DON'T push the saw. Let the saw do the work. If you find that you have to push, stop and sharpen the chain.
- DON'T refuel a hot saw.
- DON'T drop start the saw.
- DON'T operate a saw when using alcohol, drugs or when you're fatigued.