

TREE CARE LAWS

When considering tree care, it is important to protect yourself as a consumer from fraudulent or unqualified companies. Tree care in Maryland is regulated by the state government, and is monitored by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Company owners are required to have a tree expert license, and to adhere to all laws regarding the care and removal of tree. These laws protect your trees from damage, and protect you from financial loss and liability issues. Tree Care encompasses all types of pruning, removal, and chemical work. A brief description of the state licensing requirements from the Maryland DNR website states:

Adopted in 1945, the Maryland Tree Expert Law addresses tree care work done for compensation on private or public property in Maryland. The purpose of the law is to provide a layer of consumer protection by licensing qualified and insured tree care companies and individuals. Anyone seeking to practice or advertise tree care services in the State of Maryland must obtain a license from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Without a license, they may not practice or advertise tree care services in the state. To obtain a license, the applicant must possess adequate and related college education plus one year of experience under a LTE or have five years experience under a Licensed Tree Expert (LTE), then have passed an exam and carry adequate amounts of liability and property damage insurance. The license must be renewed annually every January.

There are other ways to assure that the company you hire will provide the quality you expect. Credential such as an ISA certified arborist on staff, TCIA accreditation, and CTSP certification will help assure that the company has trained personnel, high safety standards, adequate insurance, and dispute resolution policies. A good company should be happy to provide evidence of their credentials. State law also requires companies to provide written estimates and limits the amount of money that may be required in advance as a deposit . Verbal agreements and large prepayment requirements are a sure sign that something is amiss.

Unfortunately, there are still many small tree companies operating without a license. These companies are often those that offer “a great price”, most likely because they do not carry the adequate insurance required to receive licensing, or are not using the proper equipment to do the job safely. Make sure the company you hire is licensed. Go to the Maryland DNR website for more information or to check licensing status:

www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/programapps/newtreeexpert.asp