

## A to Z Policy Details

### TREES - Maintenance of Highway Trees by Third Parties such as Householders

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#### Typical Householder Query

**Are householders permitted to lop/remove branches from Council owned trees which touch windows or obscure light to habitable rooms, subject to approval by a District or County tree inspector or a registered tree surgeon hired at the householder's expense?**

There are very significant safety implications involved in carrying out work to trees within the public highway\*. Ensuring that all requirements for maintaining safety of the public highway can normally be only achieved by using specialist tree surgeons together with the appropriate traffic management. Planning consent may also be required.

\*Roads and Pavements.



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#### Related Highway/Planning regulations:

1. WCC – County Highways 2009 – Guide to Highway Policy Details & Service Levels
  2. TREES – Guidelines for Pruning Council Owned Trees
  3. BS3998: “Recommendations for Treework”
  4. Section 142 and 154 of 1980 Highway Act
  5. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990
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#### Policy

The Highway Authority would not normally grant consent for third parties and householders to remove branches from trees growing in the public highway, the reasons for this are:

- SAFETY - For users of the highway and persons involved in carrying out any works.
- HEALTH – The impact any sub-standard works may have on the highway tree that could affect its physiology, structure and stability.
- DISEASE – Incorrect and untimely works can allow disease pathogens to infect the tree.
- APPEARANCE – Ad Hoc pruning of a single tree can affect the homogenous appearance of a street or area.

If exceptional circumstances prevail, resulting in the Authority granting consent, this would be conditional and is likely to require the householder to agree to the following:

- Only works specified by the Authority and it's agents are to be actioned.
- Works must be carried out by a suitably experienced / qualified practitioner and in accordance with BS 3998 – "Recommendations for tree work" and current arboricultural best practice.
- The Highway Authorities current Public Liability Insurance requirements must be satisfied.(Presently £5 million pounds)
- Traffic management as specified by the authority or its agents must be implemented.