

When Your Trees Fail: Who Do You Call?

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Defective trees often cause damage when catastrophes occur in urban areas. After a natural disaster there may be many tree care and removal companies offering their services. It is important to know how to choose the right person or company for the job.

What is a certified arborist?

An arborist is a person trained in the care of individual trees. A certified arborist is an arborist who has a college education or several years of experience in tree care and who has passed a certification exam administered by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). An arborist certified by the ISA is required to receive Continuing Education Credits (CEU's) to keep up with the most current information and techniques.

How do you find a certified arborist?

To find a certified arborist in your area, go to www.isa-arbor.org and click on "find a certified arborist." You will be asked to enter your zip code. Then a list of certified arborists in your area will be shown. If you don't have internet access, call your county Extension agent and request this list.

Once I find the arborist, what do I do next?

- Ask for proof of insurance and then phone the insurance company if you are still unsure.
- Get more than one estimate. Hiring someone to care for your trees is a very important decision. Don't make it hastily. Take the time to shop around for the right person.
- Don't accept the first or lowest bid; compare two or three bids before making your decision.
- Ask for references.

Taking your time is worth it!

Finding a good arborist takes time. You may be in a hurry to make your property look as it did before the devastation. However, it isn't wise to choose any person who comes to your door with a chainsaw. If an accident happens, you, the homeowner, can be held liable.

What do I do with debris that has fallen on my property?

Contact your city or county government to find about recycling programs they may offer after a storm. Find out the schedule for debris pick-up in your area. If you live in a rural area where a recycling program is not established, do not burn any brush piles until the weather improves. Even though your area may have received several inches of rain during the storm, the fire danger may still be high, and burn bans may still be in effect. One ember from a brush pile could ignite the huge volume of debris downed by the storm.

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