

# Highway Tree Survey Inspection Procedure

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## Introduction

Lincolnshire County Council is currently undertaking a survey of its highway network to assess the risk posed by highways-owned and privately-owned trees. This procedure seeks to define the terms of reference for the survey. The survey is being delivered in partnership with Mouchel Enterprise with Arboricultural staff being supplied through the Highway Alliance.

## Scope

The scope of this guidance applies to Highways and Transportation but primarily is intended for use by divisional staff.

The guidance defines the process for inspection and enforcement for trees on or adjacent to the highway.

## Process for network

Trees on or adjacent to the highway are surveyed using tree management software, if appropriate the tree is assessed with a system called Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA). QTRA is a method of quantifying risk associated with tree failure and requires 3 variables in order to make the assessment.

1. Size of part likely to fail.
2. Likelihood of failure.
3. What will be hit (Target).

We will QTRA score any privately owned within falling distance of the highway that has an identified defect in the trees condition.

We will use the pre-existing traffic count information to inform the target calculation. An NVQ level 5+ inspector<sup>1</sup> will assess the likelihood of failure and the size of part likely to fail.

Data is collected using hand held PC's pre-loaded with TreeWise.

- All highways owned trees with a diameter at breast height (DBH) over 30cms will be surveyed and plotted on the GIS mapping.
- Any highway tree will be surveyed and assessed according to QTRA.
- Any privately owned tree within falling distance of the highway (i.e. 25m) with a significant defect in the trees structure will be inspected and recorded on the database and subject to QTRA assessment.

The survey will produce a large amount of data which would be difficult to manage by conventional methods, however by using the QTRA methodology we can easily filter down to the real risks to the highway network and deal with those risks proportionately.

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1 | Poll v Viscount Asquith of Morley (Bartholomew) - Judgment(11/05/2006)

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that 1/10,000 is a 'tolerable' level of risk that can be imposed on the public for the wider good, where the risk is As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP)

The HSE have therefore accepted the use of QTRA, and we have set the intervention level between **1:1 and 1:10,000**.

### Hierarchy 3-6 routes

We will follow exactly the same process for the whole network, however, where the risk score from individual trees is above 1:10,000 the emphasis will be on the collection of highway trees as asset's. The potential for private trees to fail onto these routes is the same, however the risk ratings will be massively reduced due to infrequent use of these routes (i.e. much reduced traffic flows than H1 & 2 routes).

### Public Rights of Way

Trees on or adjacent to Public Rights of Way (PROW) are very low risk due to the inherent low target occupancy of these routes, busier PROW's will be picked up in the H1 & H2 footway surveys. However, these trees will be inspected by PROW officers whilst on routine inspections according to the PROW priority inspection policy. Any trees with identified defects will be subject to further inspection by the Arboricultural Officer or Tree and Woodland Officer and necessary action taken.

### Re-inspections

Once the trees have been inspected and recorded within TreeWise there will be a requirement for a re-inspection at a frequency to be informed by the inspector or the QTRA assessment. We will also need to re-inspect regularly to ensure that trees identified for safety works are made safe and that none slip through the net.

### Highway Trees

The survey will generate a large amount of tree work for both the authority and private tree owners.

Highway trees identified for safety work through the survey will be dealt with through the term contract. Jobs will produced within TreeWise and the work priced using the supplied schedule of target costs from the term contract. Jobs will then be created in confirm and passed across to our alliance partner for actioning. On completion of the prescribed work, the TreeWise database will be updated accordingly. [See process for Highway Trees](#).

### Private Trees

For all other LCC trees, a safety report will be sent to the owning department. The status of the work will be monitored regularly and should no work be undertaken then contact will be made through the management chain.

For district and parish council's a safety report will be produced and sent to the appropriate officer, this will be monitored by the Arboricultural Officer (AO) or Tree and Woodland Officer (TWO) and should no safety work be undertaken then the appropriate action to be considered.

For trees in unknown ownership the AO or TWO will visit site to ascertain the appropriate ownership and update Treewise accordingly.

For private trees, there is a need to notify the owner(s) of all high risk private trees identified for action through the survey.

Due to the complexities of dealing with private owners especially through 4 different divisions a trial was carried out in Highways (South). [See process for Private Trees](#). To summarise, a list of private trees and site plans will be sent to the nominated divisional coordinator, these in turn will be passed to appropriate Area Highway Officers (AHO) to ascertain ownership and write to private owner asking for the trees to be made safe. Regular monthly checks of outstanding private trees will be undertaken and divisional coordinators chased appropriately.

If the AHO cannot ascertain ownership, a [legal pack](#) is also included for Legal Services to carry out a land registry search, should the private owner fail to make the tree safe, there are, within the legal pack standard letters and a referral form to instruct legal to formally serve notice under Highways Act 1980 section 154.

Any potentially hazardous trees identified outside the tree survey will be dealt with through normal defined processes.

#### Additional Documents

- [Guidance for private tree owners](#)
- [5 year work programme](#)

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