

Why We Prune City Street Trees

Trees are living organisms that require proper care in order to grow and thrive, especially in a city environment. Improper care can shorten trees' lives, and can even eventually pose hazards to the community. Proper pruning helps contribute to the ongoing good health of Santa Ana's community forest.

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) is a highly respected organization of professionals dedicated to, and trained in, quality tree care. The City of Santa Ana follows ISA guidelines in all avenues of tree planting and care, especially pruning. The City's Maintenance Services Division maintains a highly trained Forestry Maintenance Crew. Santa Ana uses an ISA Certified Arborist, and contracted crews are required to have at least one certified supervisor overseeing all tree work.

To keep mature trees safe and healthy, the City may sometimes remove:

- dead, dying, broken and/or diseased limbs
- "sucker" growth sprouting from the base of the tree
- crossing or weakly attached limbs to maintain a strong branch structure
- foliage to lighten the ends of branches and let light into the dense canopies

Taking into consideration a tree's growth rate, ISA guidelines state that no more than 25% of a tree's living branches and foliage should ever be eliminated. Slow-growing species should be pruned no more than 10%, while fast-growing varieties can handle up to 25%. Young urban trees have unique pruning needs, and our City staff keeps careful track of each new tree to ensure it receives proper care and maintains a natural shape.

Frequency of pruning is also important to a tree's health. Based on their growth patterns, City street trees are generally placed in one of three cycles for pruning:

- Low (every four years),
- Medium (every three years), or
- High (every two years).

Citizen requests for tree pruning can be made to the Maintenance Services Division at (714) 647-3380. City staff will inspect each tree and grant or deny a request based on the needs of the tree (as detailed in the criteria listed above) and public safety concerns.



Call the Maintenance Services Division at (714) 647-3380 (during normal business hours) if you:

- Witness a City tree being improperly pruned
- Have any questions about the pruning of City trees
- Want to request that a City tree be pruned
- Know of a tree that has suffered storm damage