



## Emerald Ash Borer Action Plan



Created September 2019

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## **Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan**

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## Executive Summary

EAB (*Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire) is a non-native insect that arrived in Michigan in 2002. EAB attacks ash trees (*Fraxinus* Sp.) It is suspected that it arrived from Asia on a solid wood packing material. Since EAB's arrival in 2002, 35 states and Canadian Provinces have been infested. According to the official EAB website, hundreds of millions of ash trees have been lost with costs in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

EAB was identified in South Dakota in the spring of 2018 in Sioux Falls. The arrival of EAB to Spearfish is imminent and will impact the community for ten to fifteen years after its arrival. The purpose of this plan is to achieve three goals. First, this plan keeps all citizens and visitors to Spearfish safe. Second, this plan reduces the effect of EAB on the City's annual budget by spreading the cost over more years. Third, this plan reduces the effect of EAB on the urban forest.

This plan achieves these goals by implementing preemptive strategies of removal, coupled with treatment strategies to reduce annual impact to the City. Once the EAB infestation arrives in Spearfish, more urgent management techniques will be required to combat the infestation.

No disease or pest has affected the urban forest more since Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970's and 1980's. Strong leadership and community involvement will be paramount in dealing with EAB.

## **Introduction**

EAB is an exotic beetle that attacks species of ash trees (Fraxinus sp.) to include, green ash, white ash, black ash, and blue ash. EAB will not infect mountain ash trees such as European mountain ash or American mountain ash as they are not true ash trees (Sorbus sp.).

According to state experts, estimating the arrival of EAB to Spearfish is hard to estimate. EAB could be here as soon as 2019 and quite possibly already here and undiscovered. Spearfish is at a higher risk than other South Dakota communities due to our campgrounds and our proximity to the Sturgis Bike Rally. EAB primarily travels in firewood, which makes our campgrounds a prime target. In 2018, nearly 38% of guests that stayed in the City Campground came from states infested with EAB. The City and its residents will need to prepare to fight the infestation on 4 fronts: City owned properties, Spearfish Creek and nature areas, private property and street boulevards.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this plan is to establish proactive techniques and strategies proven in EAB management to extend the disruption to our urban forest over a longer period of time. By implementing this plan before the infestation arrives, the City can spread the cost and labor over 10-15 years.

## **Background**

Trees within the City of Spearfish are managed by Chapter 19-Vegetation in the City of Spearfish ordinances. The classification of trees is broken down into two categories; park trees on public land outside of the right of way and street trees which are those within the right of way. The City of Spearfish Park, Recreation and Forestry Department is responsible for all trees and their care on all City of Spearfish owned property to include, parks, cemetery, campground, sports fields, government owned buildings, nature areas, Spearfish Creek, Lookout Mountain, and leased property such as the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks property. According to Chapter 19-71 (C), "Care of street trees shall be the responsibility of the owner of the abutting property." In 2016, the City of Spearfish adopted a new street tree policy that aids homeowners in the removal, pruning and planting of street trees. This policy was created in response to Winter Storm Atlas in 2013 which devastated our community. Trees that are not park trees are considered private property and are the responsibility of the property owner.

### **Ash Tree Population**

In 2012, the Community Threat Assessment Protocol program was created by the South Dakota Department of Resource Conservation and Forestry. The City was a participant in this study and received a full detailed report. The report provided details on population, age, location and condition of all street trees. The report showed a total of 360 ash trees located in our boulevards. In late 2018 park staff conducted an inventory of all City owned properties. A total of 2,482 trees were counted, of that, 700 were ash bringing the overall percentage to 28%. Nature areas such as the Winterville area, Creekside area and Spearfish Creek were not part of this inventory. An unknown number of ash trees exist on private property—an educated estimate (based on a windshield survey) would be that there are two times as many private ash trees as street and city owned ash trees. That means there are approximately 2,120 ash trees located on private property. The total estimated number of ash trees city wide is 3,180. This includes parks, streets and privately owned trees. Overall estimates of all trees in City limits shows roughly 30%-40% of all trees are ash trees.

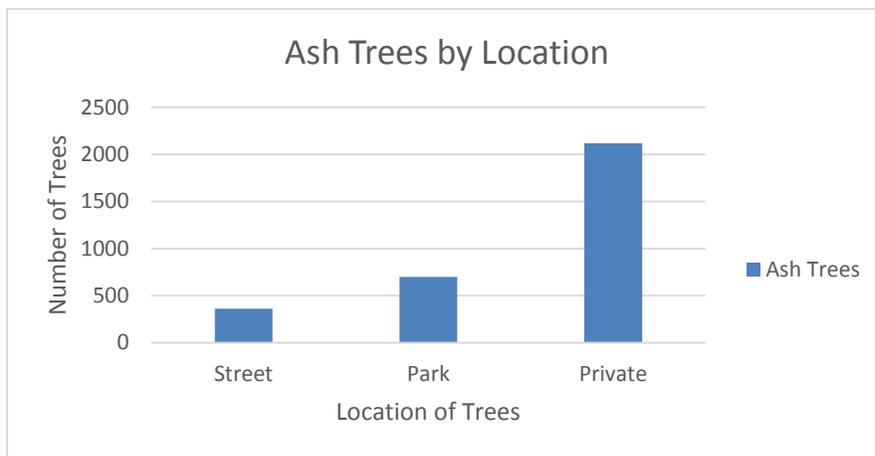


Figure 1: Spearfish Ash Trees by Location

### **Economic Impact**

The direct cost to the Spearfish community is estimated at over \$3,000,000. The direct cost to the City for removal and replacement is estimated at \$600,500. This includes all trees located in the boulevards and other city owned property with the exception of nature areas. (See Appendix A for detailed cost estimate)

This estimate does not include treatment of ash trees (\$200-\$300 per tree per year), the yearly value that the urban forest brings to Spearfish, or the real estate value that trees bring to our local property.

## **EAB Management Strategies**

The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department is implementing two strategies to combat EAB. The first is a proactive and preemptive approach that reduces ash trees based on overall health condition. The second is a reactive approach the City will face in the event of an EAB infestation.

The following elements of the City's EAB management plan were approved by the Spearfish Park, Recreation and Forestry Advisory Board, and adopted by the City Council in the fall of 2019. This plan is subject to periodic revision as new information about the EAB becomes available.

## **Preemptive EAB Strategy**

The goal of a preemptive strategy is to reduce the ash population before EAB arrives. This helps spread the cost of replanting and removal over a greater time period therefore reducing the financial burden from year to year. An additional benefit of a preemptive plan is creating diversity amongst our urban forest sooner than later. After preemptively removing ash trees, new species can be planted in place giving those new trees several years of growth prior to EAB arriving.

One advantage the City has to an infestation of EAB is— awareness. Federal, state, and local officials in the country have been on alert to the arrival of EAB in their areas. Since EAB is so hard to detect in the early stages of an infestation, officials are reporting that it generally takes three to four years before infestations are discovered. Once EAB becomes established in an area, it will become a permanent part of that ecosystem.

## **Administration**

The preemptive EAB strategy plan will be administered and implemented by the Park, Recreation and Forestry Superintendent with oversight from the Park and Recreation Director.

## **Information and Education**

The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department has an EAB informational page contained on its website. Information will be updated as new information comes available. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department will also host a free EAB educational workshop prior and upon arrival of EAB to the Black Hills Area. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Advisory Board will act as a resource to help facilitate ideas, spread public awareness and implement this plan.

## **Detection**

Early detection is very important in a community so EAB does not have time to become widespread. The Parks Recreation, and Forestry Department in cooperation with United States Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and the South Dakota Department of Agriculture will work together in order to detect EAB as soon as possible. Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department employees are briefed and trained on symptoms and signs of EAB.

## **Preventative Treatments**

According to the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, trees should not be treated until an infestation has been found within 15 miles of Spearfish. Treating high value or important trees is a very viable and effective option for the City and homeowners alike. Treating all trees is not feasible due to cost and time constraints. Treating a tree should be done every 2 years until the main infestation has passed.

## **Recommendations for Street, Park and Private Trees**

### **Street Trees**

Current City ordinance 19-71 (c) states, "Care of street trees shall be the responsibility of the owner of the abutting property." In 2013 following Winter Storm Atlas, the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department created a street tree program to help city residents with the costs of removing and planting trees. The programs calls for a 50/50 cost share with the abutting homeowner. Currently the City budgets approximately \$10,000 annually to this program. The street tree program during the EAB infestation it will cost the City an additional estimated \$200,000. Currently, the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department does not have necessary equipment to remove street trees. Street tree removals will need to be contracted in order to be removed in a timely manner or the department will need to procure the proper training and equipment.

### **City Owned Property Trees**

Nearly a decade ago, with an EAB infestation pending, Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department staff discontinued the planting of ash trees. It is recommended that Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department staff begin removing a minimum of 5% of ash trees every year in order to spread the cost over more years. Removals will take place in the fall and winter months with replanting taking place the following spring. Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department staff will begin removing the trees based on overall health and condition beginning with the unhealthiest trees first. Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department staff will identify

ash trees of higher value and will institute a chemical treatment plan once EAB is within 15 miles of Spearfish.

### **Private Trees**

For nearly a decade, the City of Spearfish has recommended to residents that they do not plant ash trees on their private property. Unfortunately, after Dutch Elm Disease struck in the 1970's and 1980's the replacement species to plant was ash. Many private property owners will be directly affected by an EAB infestation. The following are recommendations for private property owners:

- Stop planting all species of ash trees on private property.
- Start removing low quality ash trees on private property and begin planting different species. Diversity of species must be stressed.
- Do not treat ash trees on private property until the infestation is within 15 miles of Spearfish.
- Establish a relationship with a local arborist in case a pending removal is required.
- Remove infested ash trees as soon as possible after detection. Approximately one year after an ash tree has died from an EAB infestation, the tree becomes brittle and will fail.
- City ordinance 19-73 (a) states, "The City shall have the right to inspect and remove or cause to be removed any dead or diseased tree on private property if such trees constitute a hazard or harbor pests harmful to other trees. The forester shall notify the owners of such trees, in writing, to remove the same. In the event the owner shall fail to do so or make suitable arrangements for doing so within ten (10) days of such notice, the City may remove the trees and charge the cost of removal to the owners or levy the same as an assessment against the property."

### **Post EAB Detection Plan**

Historical evidence from the last twenty years shows that once a community is infested with EAB, it takes ten to fifteen years for the infestation to run through its life cycle and kill the majority of all ash trees in a community. Most communities do not detect EAB until the infestation is widespread, generally two to four years after the initial infestation.

### **Administration**

The post EAB strategy plan will be administered and implemented by the Park, Recreation and Forestry Superintendent with oversight from the Park and Recreation Director.

## **Cooperation**

The post EAB infestation plan will require a high level of cooperation amongst many agencies. USDA-APHIS and the South Dakota Department of Agriculture will be the lead on initial detection. APHIS will make the official announcement. Cooperation between utility companies and local tree contractors will be pivotal in executing a successful plan.

## **Probable EAB Scenario in Spearfish**

When EAB is first discovered in Spearfish, there will be a period when outside agencies will provide technical assistance to the City. Federal and state agencies such as APHIS and the South Dakota Department of Agriculture will work together with local governments to confirm an infestation, determine the size of the infestation, and establish quarantine areas.

Federal and state agencies are not equipped to provide long-term technical assistance after the initial detection period of EAB. These agencies have already indicated that no funding is available to address the removal or treatment of infested material from an EAB infestation.

## **Management Strategy**

Once an EAB infestation has been detected, many of the infested trees will need to be removed or destroyed. It is imperative that City ordinances are updated prior to infestation detection and that all permitting for setting up an additional disposal site at the restricted use site is complete. Once detected, the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department will implement a combination approach to management; meaning, that some trees will be treated chemically while others will be removed and replaced with other species.

This is the most realistic management option due to cost effectiveness and the reality of how the infestation works. Certain trees will be good candidates for treatment, while others should be removed both prior to infestation and during. Below is the standard “Death Curve” of an EAB infestation.

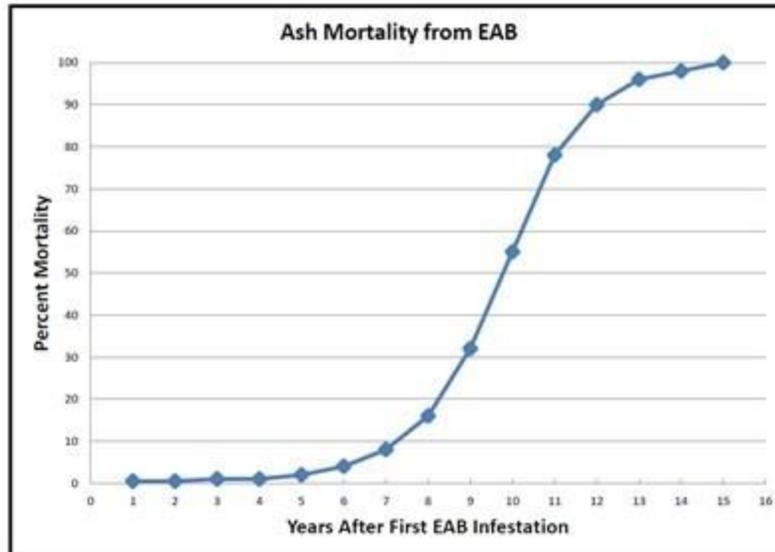


Figure 2. Standard Ash Mortality Rate During EAB Infestation

### Treatment of Removed Material

Before EAB is found in Spearfish, there will need to be disposal sites set up to handle and treat large volumes of wood debris. There will also need to be established protocol when transporting and disposing of ash trees and debris. All ash wood should be disposed at approved disposal sites within the quarantine area. Wood debris needs to be chipped to a minimum specified dimension of one inch or less in any direction, to effectively kill any EAB larvae. This specification will have to be met before any material can leave the quarantined county. Another option is to burn the wood as weather allows. Ideally controlled burns would take place in late spring around April.

According to leading EAB experts, removal of ash trees should be done between September and May when the adult beetles are not present. The most critical period for the movement of EAB infested ash trees is the months of June and July. This is the period where adult beetles emerge from trees, begin feeding on foliage, move to even more trees, and lay their eggs. During this period, it is best to leave these trees standing and not chance the possible spread of EAB by transporting beetle infested wood to other areas. If material is removed during this period, it should be chipped on site before transporting.

June and July are times with high potential for storm damage. Ash limbs and other ash tree debris created in a storm situation will need to be transported to a disposal site. To reduce the risk of spreading EAB, it would be best to chip the material on site before transporting to a disposal site.

Trimming ash trees should be delayed or chipped on site and transported to an approved disposal site between May and September. Debris from tree trimming between September and

May will need to be transported to an approved disposal site since larvae can be found in very small material. Local tree services and utility line clearance crews will need to dispose of their debris at an approved disposal site.

As EAB becomes well established and spreads throughout the city, the protocol for transporting ash tree debris will be downgraded. At this stage of the infestation, tree removals and tree trimming can be transported to the disposal site year-round without pre-treatment.

### **Storage of Wood**

City ordinance 19-74 states, “No person shall store or permit the accumulation of any elm wood in the city. No person shall store any tree or part thereof known to harbor or contain any pest infestation or declared to contain any pest infestation.” Ordinance 19-74 will be updated to include EAB infested wood in the description.

### **Firewood**

Firewood is one of the primary means of travel for the insect that causes EAB. Restricting firewood movement out of an infested area helps slow the spread of the pest. Currently, the City Campground recommends not bringing in firewood from outside of the area. Once EAB is confirmed in Spearfish, firewood will not be allowed to move out of the quarantined area without first being certified pest free. A new City ordinance will need to be created restricting the movement of firewood from the quarantined area.

### **Recommendations for Street, City Owned and Private Trees.**

#### **Street Trees**

In 2012 an inventory showed 360 street trees. Approximately 10% or 36 per year will need to be removed to keep up with the “Death Curve”. Ash trees degrade very rapidly and need to be removed within 1 year of death. Due to this degradation, many dead and dying trees along the street create a public safety concern.

Below are two alternatives for street tree management. Alternative 1 keeps the current street tree program and alternative 2 removes the street tree program.

Winter Storm Atlas in 2013 changed the urban forestry landscape in Spearfish. Park, Recreation and Forestry staff removed over 300 trees alone on City property, this number does not include street trees, or private trees. As a response, the City Council requested that the Park, Recreation and Forestry Department create a program that would assist property owners within the City to cost share tree care expenses. The program has now been instituted for over 5 years and has become popular for new tree plantings. In 2017, twenty-five new street trees

were planted at a total cost of \$4,255 with the cost being split between the homeowner and the City.

With the detection of EAB, there is no doubt this program become more popular. Currently the CIP plan allocates approximately \$10,000 towards street tree plantings and removals. If the current policy remains in place, the cost associated with the program could reach upwards of \$200,000 in additional expense to the city. Having this program remain in place will promote the removal of dead or dying ash trees by encouraging the property owner to share in the cost rather than burdening the homeowner with the entire cost. The cost to remove a tree on average is around \$800 with costs possibly exceeding several thousand for large, dangerous removals.

### **City Owned Property Trees**

If EAB hits in 2019, nearly 700 City owned ash trees will need to be addressed over the next 10 years. Total removal of all ash trees is the goal with the exception of high value trees that may be treated chemically. A realistic goal of removing 10% or 70 trees a year is recommended. In order for staff to remove City owned trees, some new equipment will need to be purchased. City staff does not have access to a high lift bucket truck. This equipment would be necessary to accomplish many of these removals. A bucket truck with a lift of 60' or more is recommended to be incorporated into the CIP. In addition, staff should be certified as either ISA Certified Arborists or South Dakota Certified Arborists.

High value ash trees exist within the City's inventory (City Hall, Campground, City Park, Etc.). These trees will be targeted for chemical treatment every 2 years during the infestation. A contract would need to be issued to a reputable company with an applicator's license to apply the injections. Soil drench applications will not be used on city owned trees to mitigate the amount of chemical exposure the public is exposed to. Every effort will be made to replant an equal number of trees the following spring in order to replace and diversify our urban forest.

### **Private Trees**

If EAB is found in 2019, approximately 2,120 ash trees will need to be removed on private property over the life of the infestation. A combination of treating and removal is recommended for the private property owners. A combination of treatment and removal allows property owners the ability to protect high value trees with chemical treatments, remove low quality trees now, and wait until unprotected trees succumb to EAB before the tree is deemed a hazard by the City.

The estimated cost to remove private trees is \$1,696,000. Dead and dying ash trees, not promptly removed by the property owner, may pose a safety concern to adjacent property owners.

To do nothing and remove trees as they die is currently the only option the City has when addressing private trees. In the event of a safety concern, the Park, Recreation and Forestry Department staff may have to utilize Ordinance 19-73 to enforce removals. In the event a tree must be removed using Ordinance 19-73, the City or its designee will execute the removal. The cost will then be billed to the homeowner.

The City will encourage homeowners to plant replacement trees on their private property that are in accordance with the City's recommended planting list.

### **Action Steps**

The following are recommended action steps to ensure that this plan is implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible.

1. Procure tree inventory software and complete a full City wide inventory.
2. Budget for and purchase a high lift bucket truck with a reach of at least 60'.
3. Train and certify all Park, Recreation and Forestry staff as ISA or SD Certified Arborists.
4. Update City ordinances to reflect EAB as a nuisance species and restrict the movement of firewood outside of a quarantined area.
5. Establish an effective public awareness campaign through multiple avenues such as the City newsletter, community workshops and online and print informational materials.
6. Work with the Park, Recreation and Forestry Advisory board to identify possible problems and solutions to the EAB infestation.
7. Work with local utility companies to generate an MOU in regards to ash trees.
8. Establish an additional disposal site to accommodate the large amount of tree material that will be taken in.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, when an EAB infestation comes to Spearfish, a cooperative effort amongst all involved will be necessary to combat this invasive species. Budgets will be affected, and our urban forest will not be the same after the infestation is over. This plan, if implemented and executed properly, will give the City and its residents the best chance to slow the infestation and give our urban forest a chance to redevelop for the next generation of Spearfish residents.

## Appendix A

### Detailed Cost Estimate

Location	Total Ash Trees
Street Trees	360
City Owned Properties	700
Private Trees*	2,120*
Total	3,180

\*2:1 Estimated ratio of private trees to public trees

### By the Numbers:

Estimated Total Number of Trees.....	3,180
Estimated % of Ash Trees.....	30%
Number of Ash on Street ROW.....	360
Number of Ash on City Owned Properties.....	700
Estimated Number of Ash on Private Property.....	2,120
Average Tree Removal Cost (City Staff).....	\$275
Average Tree Removal Cost (Private).....	\$800
Average Tree Planting Cost.....	\$300

### Estimated EAB Impact to Spearfish Urban Forest

Loss of Annual Net Benefit	\$19.52 Per Tree**	\$62,073.60
	**Midwest Community Tree Guide, PSW-GTR-199, Nov. 2006	
Removal Cost (Street Trees)	\$800 Per Tree (Contractor)	\$288,000
Replanting Cost (Street Trees 100% Replacement)	\$300 Per Tree	\$108,000
Removal Cost (City Owned Trees)	\$275 Per Tree	\$192,500
Replanting Cost (City Owned Trees)	\$300 Per Tree	\$210,000
Removal Cost (Privately Owned Trees)	\$800 Per Tree	\$1,696,000
Replanting Cost (Privately Owned Trees Assuming 80% Replacement)	\$300 Per Tree	\$508,800

### Estimated Tonnage of Waste

3,180 Trees X 5,248 lbs./Ash Divided by 2,000lbs/Ton (20 year old medium tree 40' tall x 27' spread)	8,344 Tons
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## **Appendix B**

### **City Ordinances**

#### **Division 3: Planting and Maintenance**

##### **Sec. 19-26. Definitions.**

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

*Board* is the urban forestry board created by section 19-51.

*Forester* shall mean the person employed by the city who has direct responsibility for implementing and enforcing this article.

*Park trees* shall mean the trees, shrubs, bushes and all other woody vegetation on public lands.

*Pest* shall mean any organism, insect, rodent or other agent that damages or causes abnormal growth, disease or death of any tree, shrub, bush or woody vegetation.

*Street trees* shall mean trees, shrubs, bushes, and all other woody vegetation on lands lying within municipal rights-of-way.

(Ord. No. 541, § 9-107, 5-16-83; Ord. No. 607, § 9-106, 1-19-87; Ord. No. 651, 3-20-89)

Cross reference—Definitions and rules of construction generally, § 1-2.

##### **Sec. 19-71. Street and park trees generally.**

(a) No street tree shall be planted unless the urban forestry board shall have first approved the kind, size, variety, and location thereof, and granted a permit therefor. The permit shall be issued without charge.

(b) A list of trees and shrubbery suitable for street trees shall be developed by the board.

(c) Care of street trees shall be the responsibility of the owner of the abutting property.

(d) It shall be unlawful for any person to top any street or park tree. Topping is defined as the cutting back of limbs to stubs more than six (6) inches in diameter or trimming within the crown to such a degree as to remove the normal canopy and disfigure the tree. Trees severely damaged by storms or other causes, or interfering with utility services or similar obstructions may be topped with the approval of the board.

(e) Stumps of street and park trees shall not project above the surface of the ground.

(f) The city shall have the right to plant, prune, maintain and remove trees, plants and shrubs within rights-of-way and on public grounds.

(g) The city may remove or cause to be removed, any tree or part thereof which is infested with any pest or is in an unsafe condition or is injurious to sewers, electric power lines, gas lines, water lines or other public improvements or which interferes with public walkways, streets, highways or alleys.

(Ord. No. 541, §§ 9-109, 9-110, 5-16-83; Ord. No. 607, § 9-10, 1-19-87)

**Cross references**—Streets and public rights-of-way, § 14-26 et seq.; parks and recreation areas, § 14-251 et seq.

**Sec. 19-73. Trees on private property.**

(a) The city shall have the right to inspect and remove or cause to be removed any dead or diseased tree on private property if such trees constitute a hazard or harbor pests harmful to other trees. The forester shall notify the owners of such trees, in writing, to remove the same. In the event the owner shall fail to do so or make suitable arrangements for doing so within ten (10) days of such notice, the city may remove the trees and charge the cost of removal to the owners or levy the same as an assessment against the property.

(b) Any person claiming an interest in any tree ordered to be removed may appeal such order to the board within seven (7) days from the date of the order subject to the limitations in section 19-74.

(Ord. No. 541, § 9-111, 5-16-83; Ord. No. 607, § 9-109, 1-19-87)

**Cross references**—Buildings and building regulations, Ch. 6; mobile homes and mobile home parks, Ch. 12; subdivisions, Ch. 15; zoning, supplementary district regulations, App. A, Art. V.

**Sec. 19-74. Storage of dead or cut trees with any contagious disease or pest infestation.**

No person shall store or permit the accumulation of any elm wood in the city. No person shall store any tree or part thereof known to harbor or contain any pest infestation or declared to contain any pest infestation.

(Ord. No. 541, § 9-112, 5-16-83; Ord. No. 607, § 9-110, 1-19-87)

**Sec. 19-75. Interference.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to prevent, delay, or interfere with the city or any of its agents engaged in the planting, cultivation, mulching, pruning, spraying, inspecting or removing of any trees within the city as authorized by this article.

(Ord. No. 541, § 9-113, 5-16-83; Ord. No. 607, § 9-111, 1-19-87)