



Los Angeles Unified School District Office of Environmental Health & Safety Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure



I. Purpose

This Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure (Procedure) was developed to ensure the District is carefully managing its vast collection of trees while remaining in compliance with regulations protecting biological resources and the California Environmental Quality Act. Specifically, compliance with this Procedure will ensure that District activities will not conflict with any locally adopted tree preservation policies or ordinances while ensuring the protection of breeding and nesting habitat of birds protected by the Fish and Game Code, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and bird species of special concern.

II. Background

The District is obligated to trim and remove trees for public safety, protection of property, and tree health. Trees are considered an asset to the District, end users, the public and the environment. They provide shade, process CO₂ and other potentially harmful gases and release oxygen. They provide a source of food and habitat to wildlife. They also have a monetary value in terms of replacement and maintenance costs. There are trees that are protected by federal, state and city ordinances, while others may be considered culturally significant. Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present and future generations as defined below:

- **Aesthetic:** Trees are of aesthetic value if they reflect important features on District grounds. These trees often visually dominate a place by their size, scale and visual impact. Trees play an important role in elements of school campuses such as main entrances and courtyard/quad areas.
- **Historical:** Trees are often associated with important eras, buildings, events or people. Trees may reflect specific epoch in garden design or landscape architecture.
- **Scientific:** Trees could be rare, vulnerable, endangered or of a great age. Remnant trees from former natural ecological communities may retain valuable habitat and faunal corridors for other endangered and dependent species.
- **Social:** Trees help identify special places. They may have associations with individual people and communities or tell stories of other times and places.

III. Procedure

District procedure requires that all tree trimming and removal conducted on District property adhere to the procedures outlined in this document.

Tree removals on non-District owned properties must adhere to that jurisdiction's ordinance/policy.

Tree trimming or removal shall be avoided during the avian breeding and nesting season (February 1st through August 31st) when feasible.

IV. Approval Exemptions

Approval is not required for impacts to trees, including protected native trees, under the following conditions:

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- Emergency actions
 - Removal of dead, diseased, or damaged trees or branches
 - Normal pruning and trimming
 - Projects that are limited to interior construction, are more than 5 feet away from the dripline of any tree, or do not include any ground disturbance

V. Activity Scheduling

Tree trimming or removal during avian non-breeding and non-nesting season (September 1st through January 31st).

- Tree trimming or dead tree removal may proceed without a nesting and breeding bird survey by a Qualified Biologist.
- If an active bird nest is found by the tree trimming or removal workers, activities must be halted and OEHS immediately contacted. If an inactive nest is observed, it should be left in place whenever feasible. Birds and their nests cannot be removed from the school grounds unless there are special circumstances. Injured birds may be transported to a local veterinarian or the California Wildlife Center at 26026 Piuma Road, Calabasas California.

Tree trimming or removal during avian breeding and nesting season (February 1st through August 31st)

- If tree trimming or removal activities cannot feasibly avoid the breeding season, the following guidelines must be followed.
- A Qualified Biologist shall conduct a nesting and breeding bird survey no more than three days prior to trimming or removal of the tree to detect any breeding or nesting behavior in or within 300 feet of the work area (limited to District property). If an active bird nest is found, tree trimming must be halted and OEHS immediately contacted. If an inactive nest is observed, it should be left in place whenever feasible.

VI. Applicability

This Procedure applies to activities that may impact protected native trees, healthy mature non-protected trees, and activities that impact any tree that is located on LAUSD property. This includes removal, relocation, root trimming, heavy equipment working within the dripline, or any act that may inflict damage to the tree or root system, including changing the natural grade of the land.

VII. Procedures

STEP 1: DETERMINE IF THERE IS THE POTENTIAL TO IMPACT TREES

The project proponent will determine if any trees may be impacted by project activities. Trees causing damage to the campus (trees that may be located too close to buildings, uplifting pavement and concrete, invasive roots, etc.) should also be identified.

If no trees will be impacted, no further action is required. If trees may be impacted, proceed to Step 2.

STEP 2: DETERMINE IF A PREVIOUS TREE INVENTORY HAS BEEN COMPLETED

The project or activity proponent should check with the District's Arborist to determine if a previous Tree Inventory Report with existing tree plot plans or CAD files has been completed for the entire campus or the work area. If a previous Tree Inventory Report does not include existing tree plot plans or CAD files, a new Tree Inventory Report may be needed.

If a previous Tree Inventory Report is not available, proceed to Step 3. If a previous Tree Inventory Report is available, incorporate the information into the project design and proceed to Step 3c, Tree Impact Report Contents.

STEP 3: TREE INVENTORY REPORT

The project or activity proponent shall have a Tree Inventory Report prepared by a Certified Arborist. The project or activity proponent should consult with School administrators and, where additional input is needed, alumni or any other member of the community with knowledge about the presence of any culturally significant trees or trees that are important to the community that are located within the work area. The project or activity proponent shall bring a copy of the site survey (which may already include some tree locations) to determine if proposed activities may impact trees.

a. Arborist's Qualifications

The Tree Inventory and Impact Report must be prepared by one of the following:

- An In-house (LAUSD) Tree Maintenance Personnel Certified Arborist
- A person with at least four (4) years of experience in the business of transplanting, moving, caring for and maintaining trees who is a certified Arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and:
 - (a) holds a valid California license as an Agricultural Pest Control Advisor or
 - (b) is a California-licensed Landscape Architect or
 - (c) is a registered consulting Arborist with the American Society of Consulting Arborists.

b. Tree Inventory Contents

A Tree Inventory is conducted to document the existing trees within the work area. The Tree Inventory should contain the following:

- Tree Number (unique tree number to appear on demolition, grading, and site plans and by way of an aluminum embossed tag affixed to the tree trunk – when access allows)
- GPS Coordinates – if a site plan showing the tree locations is not available
- Tree species (Botanical and Common Name)
- Color Photographs
- Trunk Diameter (measured at 4.5 feet above natural grade)
- Height and Canopy Spread (approximated using intervals of 10 feet)
- Health and Structural Condition
- Tree protection status¹
 - CEQA Scenic²
 - Historic Monument³
 - City of Los Angeles Significant Tree⁴
 - Or relevant/applicable City
 - City of Los Angeles Protected Tree⁵

¹ This list may vary for other cities. For the District, this definition also includes trees that have been described as retaining some site-specific relevance to the school campus or alumni as a memorial or otherwise.

² A CEQA scenic tree is highly visible, prominent and possesses unique or distinctive aesthetic qualities due to its size, structure, unusual specimen, etc.

³ List available at: http://bss.lacity.org/urbanforestry/index_cultural.htm City of Los Angeles list available at: http://bss.lacity.org/urbanforestry/index_cultural.htm

⁴ The definition of a significant tree varies according to the relevant City of Los Angeles Specific Plan.

⁵ City of Los Angeles Municipal Ordinance 177,404

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- County of Los Angeles Oak Tree Ordinance⁶

c. *Tree Impact Report Contents*

After completing the project design, results of the Tree Inventory should be used to determine impacts to trees located within the work area. The Tree Impact Report will contain the results of the Tree Inventory and the following:

- Proposed Disposition (Preserve/Remove)
- Tree Protection Plan (Note: a *Tree Protection Plan* applies to **all** trees within the project site during construction. This is different than *Tree Protection Status* and *Protected Trees*, which applies specifically to trees protected by ordinance)

If the project or activity impacts protected tree(s), the Tree Impact Report will include:

- Recommended Mitigation Measures
- General Replacement Guidelines
 - Newly planted trees should be a 24" box or larger at planting
 - Tree species must be of appropriate size at maturity for the space planted
 - The selection must be made from the LAUSD Approved Plant List or approved by the LAUSD Tree Maintenance Supervisor
- Mitigation Ratios – protected trees or shrubs on LAUSD’s property should be replaced at a 4:1 ratio⁷

d. *Report Distribution*

- Provide any surveys or submittals prepared by a third party to the District’s arborist. Discuss any key findings with the District’s Arborist.
- Provide a copy to the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) CEQA Manager and discuss the presence of any protected trees and their proposed disposition.

If trees will be trimmed or removed, proceed to Step 4.

STEP 4: TRIMMING OR REMOVING TREES

The project or activity proponent shall coordinate with the OEHS to ensure a nesting bird survey is completed within 3 days prior to trimming or removal of any tree, if the activity is scheduled during the nesting and breeding bird season (February 1 through August 31). OEHS will provide a nesting bird report/memorandum once the survey is complete. Additionally, notification for inspection to the District’s Arborist and a written approval from the school Principal and Local District Superintendent are required before any tree removal.

If the project or activity requires the removal of any live trees, a Tree Removal Application must be completed and provided to OEHS (attached). If the impacted trees are not protected, signatures from the Local District Superintendent and the School Principal are required.

If protected trees will be impacted, proceed to Step 5.

STEP 5: IMPACTING PROTECTED TREES

The District will avoid impacting any healthy protected tree(s). If impacts cannot be avoided, the project or activity proponent shall coordinate with the OEHS CEQA Project Manager to ensure adequate mitigation replacement ratios have been incorporated into the project design.

⁶ County of Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 22.56.2050

⁷ LAUSD’s mitigation ratio is consistent with the City of Los Angeles’ mitigation ratio requirements.

If the project or activity requires the removal of any protected trees, a Tree Removal Application must be completed and provided to OEHS (attached). If the impacted trees are protected, signatures from the Director of OEHS, Director of Maintenance & Operations, Local District Superintendent and School Principal are required.

VIII. PROTECTED NATIVE TREE AND SHRUB LIST

Protected native trees which measure four inches or more in cumulative diameter at four and one half feet above the ground level:

Protected Trees:

- Oaks
 - Valley oak
 - California live oak
 - Canyon oak
 - Mesa oak
 - Interior live oak
 - All other indigenous oaks excluding scrub oak
- Southern California black walnut
- Western sycamore
- American sycamore
- California bay

Protected Shrubs:

- Mexican Elderberry
- Toyon

This definition shall not include any tree grown or held for sale by a licensed nursery, or trees planted or grown as a part of a tree planting program.



**Los Angeles Unified School District
Office of Environmental Health & Safety
Tree Trimming & Removal Application**



Please submit completed form to: environmental_review@lausd-oehs.org

Date: _____

From (Include Title): _____

Phone: (____) ____-____

Email: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

Local/Board Districts _____

Total number of trees to be removed or trimmed more than 10%: _____

Total number of protected trees to be removed or trimmed more than 10%, if known: _____

Anticipated date of tree removal: _____

Reason(s) for tree removal or trimming:

Landscape/Plot Plan Attached: (if yes, check box)

Tree Inventory Report Attached: (if yes, check box)

Tree Impact Report Attached: (if yes, check box)

No person shall relocate or remove any healthy protected tree without first having applied for and obtained approval from the Director of OEHS, Director of M and O, Local District Superintendent, and School Principal.

School Principal

Date

Local District Superintendent

Date

Director, Maintenance & Operations
(for protected trees only)

Date

Director, Office of Environmental Health & Safety
(for protected trees only)

Date

Official Use Only

- Please Check One: Request Approved
 Request Approved **with conditions** (see attached)
 Request Denied