



A contract is the key to preventing misunderstandings and assuring the work is performed to the standards you expect. Most companies have their own forms, and conditions vary widely. Read the document carefully and check with your attorney if you have questions.

There are several key items a contract should include:

- 1) The name and physical address of the contractor.
- 2) The date that work is to begin and end.
- 3) Exactly what work will be done. For example, “Prune all dead, dying, diseased and weak branches 1.5 inches or greater in diameter.”
- 4) Specify the work will be done according to an acceptable standard (see tree work standards box).
- 5) If your tree is to be sprayed, get a written statement detailing the specific insect or disease to be treated; the chemical to be used and how much; and what you need to do (cover lawn furniture, keep pets inside...) Confirm they have a commercial pesticide applicator license.
- 6) If fertilizing is to be done, specify type, amount and method of application. Provide a rough map of the property, identifying trees to be serviced, or a clearly written description of location.
- 7) Specify what clean-up work will be done and when.
- 8) Clarify who will get firewood, wood chips, or other materials. If it is for you, specify what length you want and where it should be piled.
- 9) Clarify if removal of tree includes grinding out the stump and surface roots to one foot below grade, filling with topsoil and planting grass.
- 10) Specify all state and local laws will be followed.
- 11) What is the absolute total dollar amount you will be charged? Leave no room for confusion over whether the price is per tree or for the whole job. Work is usually priced as a single fee for the whole job or on an hourly basis plus materials. When using the latter, include the wording, “but not to exceed...”

Beware of people soliciting work door-to-door without identification on their vehicle, uniform, or I.D. card. “Door knockers” are especially common after storms, when there is an opportunity for quick money. However, storm damage often creates high-risk situations for both workers and homeowners such as near electrical power lines. In addition, trees damaged by the storm can be further injured if work is not done correctly. Never be rushed by bargains, and never pay in full in advance.

### Tree Work Standards

ANSI Z133.1 American National Standard for Arboricultural Operations-Pruning, Repairing, Maintaining, & Removing Trees, and Cutting Brush-Safety Requirements Revision 2001, American National Standards Institute, NY, NY.

ANSI A300 Part 1, Tree Care Operations- Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance-Standard Practices Revision 2001, American National Standards Institute, New York, NY.

ANSI A300 Part 2, Tree Care Operations-Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance-Standard Practices (Fertilization) Revision 1998, American National Standards Institute, New York, NY.

ANSI A300 Part 3, Tree Care Operations-Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance-Standard Practices (Support Systems, Cabling, Bracing, and Guying), Revision 2000, American National Standards Institute, NY, NY.

ANSI A300 Part 4, Lightning Protection Systems, 2002, American National Standards Institute, New York, NY.

*ANSI standards are available from Global Engineering Documents, Customer Service Department, 15 Inverness Way East, Englewood, CO 80112, (800) 854-7179, [www.global.ihs.com](http://www.global.ihs.com) Companion simple language guides are available from the International Society of Arborists <http://www.isa-arbor.com/>*

*This information was adapted from North Carolina State Extension, Arizona Extension, & Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection by Karen P. Bennett, Extension Forestry Professor and Specialist. August, 2008.*

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