

General Arborist Report Specifications

Saanich Council and the community value trees. Saanich's [Tree Protection Bylaw](#) helps to protect, retain, regulate and replace trees to sustain the urban forest. Saanich is granted the authority to regulate trees under the Community Charter, and Saanich Parks oversees the Tree Protection Bylaw (Bylaw). These specifications are provided to help arborists and their clients better understand the kind of information Saanich needs to review various applications to mitigate impacts to trees and to be consistent with the Bylaw.

More details about each type of report can be found on [Saanich's website](#) and are hyperlinked below. This information sheet provides general requirements for arborist reports and tree assessments.

Arborist recommendations and methods must be consistent with International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Best Management Practices (BMP) and/or American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards. Replacement trees must meet Canadian Landscape association standards.

Definitions (please refer to the Tree Protection Bylaw for technical definitions)

- **Arborist:** means an arborist who: a) is certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA); and b) is qualified as a tree risk assessor by the International Society of Arboriculture or is qualified by the Province of British Columbia as a Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessor.
- **DBH:** Diameter at Breast Height
- **PRZ:** Protected Root Zone: the area around a tree containing the bulk of its critical root system.
- **Public trees:** Trees on municipally owned properties, boulevards and parks, regardless of size, are defined as "protected" and a permit is required to conduct works in or around public trees.
- **Tree Damaging Activities:** Specifically defined in the Bylaw, includes works in or around protected trees (PRZ, stem or canopy) that require a tree cutting permit.

- **High Value Trees:** Includes trees that are worthy of retention efforts based upon the review of a professional (ISA) arborist that includes criteria such as age, structure, health, vitality, species, the tree's ability to withstand development activities in and around its above and below ground structures, the suitability of that tree relative to its location and on-site use and infrastructure, and the feasibility of the techniques required to retain the tree. These criteria will help inform when and where extra efforts can be focused to practically retain trees with an excellent chance of thriving into the future. This definition does not mean to negate that fact that all trees embody multiple values.

Types of arborist reports and tree assessments

There are different kinds of arborist reports and assessments, and a combination of different information may be required.

1. Arborist Report with a Tree Management Plan

An arborist report is required when there are protected trees on-site, or any off-site protected trees that have a dripline within 4 m of proposed development activities. The tree management plan describes how trees will be retained and protected during development activities or provides rationale why protected trees require removal. On occasion, Parks may require additional information to demonstrate on-site tree replacement is feasible. In those cases, the tree management plan is the appropriate place to provide information about what species of trees and where they will be planted when the project is complete.

2. Impact Assessment

An impact assessment is required when "tree damaging" activities have occurred, and a report is needed to detail the impacts to the tree, and what methods will be used to mitigate those impacts. This report will likely require a tree risk assessment for impacted trees as detailed below.

3. Tree Risk Assessment

A Tree Risk Assessment provides a methodical assessment to determine the condition and risk rating for a tree. There are different levels of tree assessments depending on the situation.

Level 1 Limited Visual Assessment: arborists conduct an assessment by walking or driving by the tree and recording limited amounts of information to determine its overall condition and risk. A Level 1 assessment is typically insufficient to adjudicate a tree permit request.

Level 2 Basic Assessment: a more detailed visual assessment of a given tree, supplemented with the use of simple tools such as a mallet or probe to evaluate any potential defects, such as cavities.

Level 3 Advanced Assessment: a detailed tree assessment that provides information beyond a Level 2 visual assessment. Provides detailed information about specific tree parts, defects, targets or site conditions. Specialized equipment, data collection and analysis, and/or expertise are usually required for advanced assessments. The additional information from a Level 3 Assessment may be used to determine if any risks can be mitigated or to justify why the tree requires removal.

4. [Post construction Arborist supervision memos](#)

A memo detailing the extent of tree impacts and recommendations for mitigation. These supervision memos are required when a set out as a condition of a tree permit, or to provide evidence the works occurred under arborist supervision.

Regardless of the type of report required, the following spells out the general requirements for all arborist reports.

Arborist report specifications (general)

- ☐ Must be typewritten
- ☐ Use metric measurements
- ☐ Include arborist's name, company, address, phone number, email address and ISA certification number
- ☐ Provide the client's name and address
- ☐ Civic address of property in question
- ☐ Date of the report
- ☐ Date and time of site visit and general description of site conditions
- ☐ Brief description of scope of arborist-related work
- ☐ Tree information (see below)
- ☐ Mitigation options
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Arborist's Signature
- ☐ Conclusions and recommendations

Required tree information

- All trees must be marked with a physical marker (i.e., tag)
- Report must include tree Tag Number(s) in numerical order, correlating to plans and physical tree tags
- **Tree inventory in table** format including:
 - Tree tag number in numerical order
 - Species (scientific and common names)
 - Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) to the nearest centimetre as per the Bylaw
 - Height (approximate)
 - Crown spread
 - Structure (crown/trunk/roots as appropriate)
 - Condition (assessment of vigor and health (good, fair, poor, etc.))
- Location – either by survey plan or overhead maps for small projects (please include indication of canopy size)
- History (if known)
- Any other relevant details or other pertinent information

For more information, please contact Saanich Parks: 250-475-5522 or Parks@saanich.ca