Arboricultural Association

Choosing your Tree Surgeon *(Arborist)*

This leaflet has been produced to help you choose the **right people** to do the **right job-safely** and efficiently.

If **tree work** is not done properly it could lead to:

Injury to people*

Damage to property*

Serious harm to your trees that have taken many years to grow...

all through ill-advised and badly executed tree work.
**Potentially you may be liable if a 3rd party is affected.*

Tree work (arboriculture) requires a high degree of technical competence, supported by training and experience. For these reasons tree work should only be undertaken by well trained, competent arborists experienced at the type of work being done, e.g. tree pruning/tree removal.

Genuine or Not?

Anyone can call themselves a tree surgeon (arborist), place an advert in Yellow pages and offer a service.

An advert does not guarantee quality of work or that it will be carried out safely. So always use an ARB Approved Contractor.*

Competent arborists will have certificates which show that they have been trained and assessed. They will often have other academic qualifications in arboriculture and will use safety equipment to protect you, your property and themselves.

Reputable tree care companies will be pleased to supply copies of their insurance, qualifications and professional memberships and will work to nationally recognised standards. Many will be Approved Contractors of the Arboricultural Association.

Your local ARB Approved Contractor is:

All Aspects Tree Services Ltd

*Ensure you are using an ARB Approved Contractor by checking the web address below.

Arboricultural Association
The Voice of Arboriculture

www.trees.org.uk/Find-a-Tree-Surgeon

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Questions you should ask an arborist

Stage 1: Ask for a quote*

A reputable arborist will always give a positive response.

1. **Are you insured?**
   If **YES**, please show me evidence of insurance – Employers Liability & Public Liability (recommended minimum of £5 million).

2. **Do you work to a British Standard?**
   If **YES**, which one?
   Should be *BS 3998: 2010 'Tree Work – Recommendations'*.

3. **What qualifications do you and your staff hold?** (ask to see copies)
   Compulsory: MUST have NPTC/Lantra Awards** certificates for chainsaw use.

   Recommended: Certificates for other skills and machines. Arboricultural knowledge e.g. National Certificates and Diplomas in Arboriculture.

4. **Will you provide a written quotation?**
   If **NO**, reject the contractor.*

5. **Are you a member of a professional organisation?**
   Membership does not guarantee work standards but does show a degree of commitment.**

6. **Can you provide me with the phone number of a referee who can show me some of your work?**
   If **YES**, follow up the reference.

* Obtain more than one quote, ideally 3.

** NPTC and Lantra Awards are national organisations that assess the competence of people using chainsaws and other arboricultural equipment. Competent arborists will be able to show you an A4 sized certificate or plastic ID card if requested.

Stage 2: Choosing the quote that suits you

When you receive your quotations check they include the following before deciding which one to accept:

- Reference to *BS 3998: 2010 'Tree Work – Recommendations'*.
- Clear and full details of the work to be undertaken (the specification).
- What will happen to the timber and brushwood?
- What will happen with the tree stumps?
- Whether VAT is included.
- Who will be responsible for obtaining permission if the trees are protected?
- What steps will be taken to protect you and your property (the risk assessment)?

Be aware that there may be a limited quote validity period.

Stage 3: Consumer protection

If problems arise you can get help and advice from industry bodies such as the AA, ISA or TrustMark.

Competent arborists

In the UK there are two recognised schemes certifying the competence of arborists through examination and regular re-assessment or Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The Arboricultural Association (AA) maintains an online directory of quality assured tree surgery businesses. These ARB Approved businesses are regularly assessed for their health and safety procedures, office and business practices, including customer care, as well as their quality of tree work. They will display the AA Approved Contractor logo. Check the contractor's approval is current on the AA website www.**trees**.org.uk via '**Find a Professional**' link.

Individual arborists may be certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). The ISA assesses the individual for their knowledge and ability. Certified arborists will display the ISA Certified Arborist logo. Please check with the Society that the arborist's approval is current, through the ISA website www.**isa-arboriculture**.org.

Other arborists may be equally competent. If they do not subscribe to either of the above schemes you should take more care to follow up the advice contained in Stages 1 & 2 above.

Contact information

This information leaflet has been produced with support from the following industry organisations and with the help and co-operation of the Health and Safety Executive.

Check your ARB Approved Contractor here at:

www.**trees**.org.uk/**Find-a-Tree-Surgeon**

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