



## Selecting a tree work contractor



There are many terms used by companies offering tree works. The majority operating as 'Tree Surgeons', 'Arborists' or 'Arboriculturists'. All should be experienced to carry out works to a specification or advise on individual cases, many will provide written tree work specifications or surveys if required.

Before employing a contractor, check that the trees are not covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), Planning Condition or within a Conservation Area. If they are you will require written consent from the Tree Officer prior to carrying out any works, a reputable contractor will normally do this on your behalf if required although you must always check before allowing work to proceed.

To ensure that you select well trained, experienced and competent Arborists to work on your trees the following should provide guidance to help you in your selection.

Aerial tree inspection





Safe site set up

## Step 1: A tree contractor should be:

- Insured which includes Public Liability & Employers Liability of at least £5 million pounds
- Qualified i.e. they hold National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC) certificates for chainsaw use, tree climbing or machine use. Including tree knowledge demonstrated by them having National Certificates, Diplomas, NVQ's or other qualifications
- A Member of a trade association or professional organisation such as the Arboricultural Association (AA) [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk) or International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) [www.isa-arboriculture.org](http://www.isa-arboriculture.org). A list of approved tree contractors can be found from these websites.
- Be able to provide a written quotation
- Should be professional and presentable
- Work to a British Standard which should be BS3998:2010 Tree Work - Recommendations
- Provide details of a referee who can show you some of their work

## Step 2: What to ask for in a quote:

Ask an Arborist for a quote, but consider the following points when asking for a quote to ensure they provide you with a quote for what you require.

- Specific details of the tree works required e.g. 15-20% Thinning
- Details of works per tree
- If felling is required are they dismantling or clear felling
- Do you want dead wood from the tree removal or retained for wildlife
- Do you want the logs stacked on site or taken away
- Do you want the debris chipped and take away
- Are there any special requirements i.e. access restrictions or services to avoid
- Pre-book date for works so ask them when are they available to carry out the works
- Time proposed for the work i.e. how long will it take



### Step 3: Get a minimum of 3 quotes:

- This allows you choice
- You get to select the contractors and avoid 'door knockers'
- It also provides a good way of checking for competitive pricing
- The lowest may not necessarily be the cheapest in the long term
- Always get a written quote
- A chance to meet the Contractors and judge if they are reputable and professional in appearance

If in any doubt ask the contractor for examples of recently completed tree works so you can have a look at their work. Any reputable contractor should have nothing to hide and should be pleased to answer any queries you may have.

### Step 4: What to look for in a quote

- Look for references like BS3998 2010 Tree Work - Recommendations
- Quotes should have clear and full details of the work to be undertaken e.g. 15-20% Thinning
- A plan should be provided of which trees and where they are located
- Check whether VAT is included
- Have they included to put in a Tree works application or Conservation Area notification otherwise who will be responsible for obtaining the necessary permissions
- How are they proposing to dispose of the debris?
- Are there any additional charges to consider for example stump grinding?
- Is any special equipment proposed like a mobile elevated work platform (MEWP)?
- Avoid quotes with terms like 'lopping and topping' as these are not standard arboricultural practices and the end result may be unsightly or even hazardous.
- Copy of risk assessment or method statement to show what steps will be taken to protect you and your property
- Provide timescale for works as to how long it may take and lead in time and if this is not, then ask
- The quote should state clearly a price for all the works specified and if it is not clear ask for clarification
- Be aware that there may be a limit to the quote validity period

If you have any queries or you are aware of contractors that may be operating in an unscrupulous manner please contact the Tree Officers.

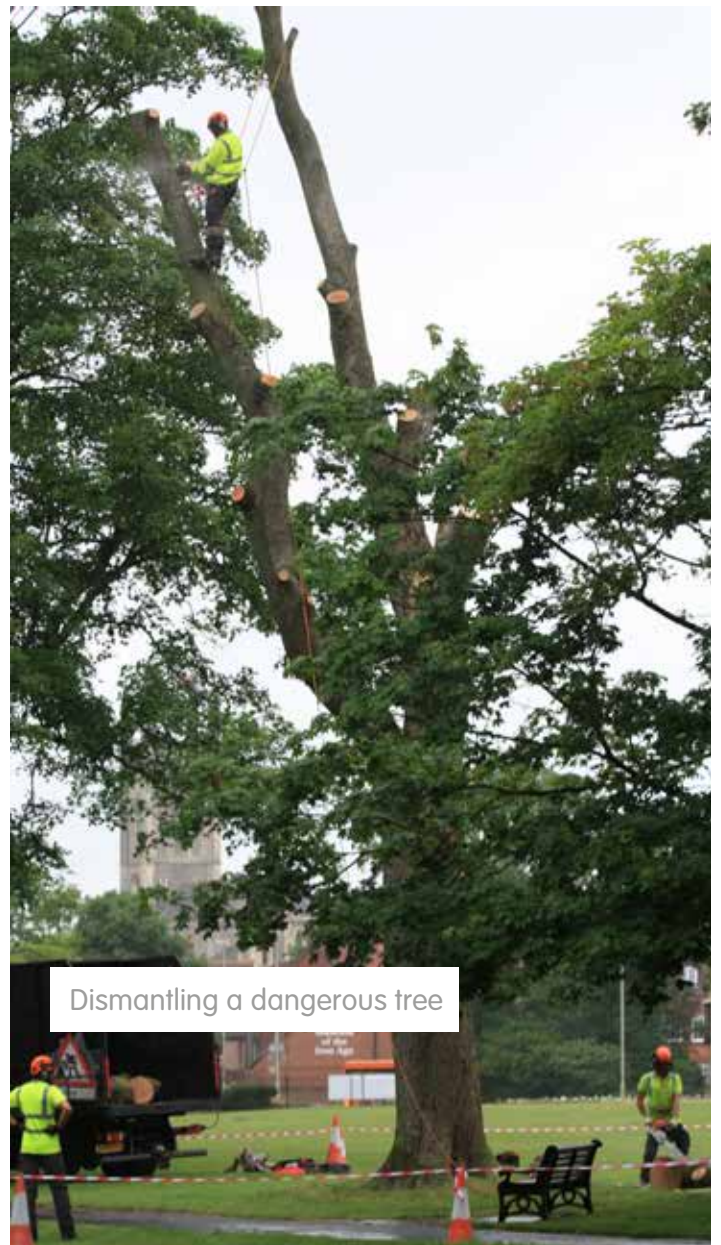


## Step 5: Engaging the Tree Contractor of your choice

Prior to engaging your chosen tree contractor, you can ask to see their qualifications and insurance if you want to check this first including a risk assessment. A competent tree contractor should be able to demonstrate they have the required competency for the work to be carried out. Competent arborists will be able to show you their certificates or ID cards if requested.

## Step 6: Consumer protection

If problems arise you can get help and advice from industry bodies such as the Arboricultural Association (AA), the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) or Trustmark.



## Useful contacts and references:

If you have any concerns regarding trees managed by Test Valley Borough Council - often land in public open spaces and parks - please contact Customer Services who will firstly confirm whether the land is indeed managed by the council.

Telephone 01264 368000 or 01794 527700  
Minicom 01264 368052

Test Valley Borough Council, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 3AJ  
[www.testvalley.gov.uk](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk)

Date of publication: Sept 2016 thanks to West Berkshire Council for sharing the information contained with this publication

Arboricultural Association  
The Malthouse, Stroud Green, Standish, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, GL10 3DL Tel: 01242 522152  
[www.trees.org.uk/Directory-of-Tree-Surgeons](http://www.trees.org.uk/Directory-of-Tree-Surgeons)

Forestry Contracting Association  
[www.fcauk.com](http://www.fcauk.com)