

Protecting Trees During Construction

Importance

Construction damage is one of the most common causes of tree death. Trees trunks are wounded and equipment breaks branches. The most serious effect is disturbance of the root zone from equipment. Damaged trees decline over several months to several years when their roots are compacted, buried, or removed during construction. Arborist consultation is strongly advised before any construction begins.

Tree Protection Zone

Maintaining a protection zone free of equipment and grade changes minimizes the effects of construction damage. Careful excavation and cutting of roots is needed if there is to be any encroachment into the root zone. A fence should be built to protect the trunk and root zone. Generally, trees should be provided 1 foot of protection for each inch of trunk diameter. The distance should be greater for more mature trees. The tree protection zone should not be violated for any reason.

Post Construction Care

Following construction, a tree's root system should be watered to maintain adequate, though not excessive, soil moisture. Applying a layer of mulch over the root system will help limit competition from weeds and grass while regulating soil temperature and moisture. Fertilization is typically not recommended within the first year because water and mineral uptake may be reduced due to root damage.



Workers ignored this tree protection zone. Heavy equipment and materials stored on the root system will have significant consequences.



Tree protection zones minimize the effects of construction damage when enforced.