

You may have recently had your trees assessed and advised that certain work is carried out, or you may be concerned about your trees and are thinking about employing a tree surgeon.

So how do you identify a competent tree surgeon when anyone can call themselves a tree surgeon and advertise their services?

Although not a definitive guide the following information should help you to choose the right tree surgeon.

Insurance

Tree surgeon's must have adequate insurance for the work they carry out. They should have a minimum of £2 million public liability insurance or cover of £5 million if working in high risk areas such as roadsides, schools or busy public areas.

A reputable tree surgeon will be able to show you proof of their cover on request.



Recognised standards and training

Tree work operations require a high degree of skill and technical competence. Competent tree surgeons work to nationally recognised standards and are qualified to work safely and to carry out surgery which avoids harming the tree.

- Chainsaw operators must have passed the various chainsaw operations assessments set by the National Proficiency Tests Council (NPTC) and as proof should carry their NPTC identity card.
- All tree work should be carried out to the British Standard 3998: Recommendations for Tree Works 1989. This sets out the basic standards for tree work which all tree surgeons should be working to.
- Many tree surgeons have achieved recognised qualifications in arboriculture, e.g. National Certificate or National Diploma in Arboriculture or the Arboricultural Association's Technician's Certificate. Although not an essential requirement for tree surgeons such qualifications identify those with more than simply a practical knowledge.

Professional Membership

Tree surgeons who are certified or approved by professional arboricultural organisations will usually display this in their advertisements and letterheads. The two main professional organisations are the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and the Arboricultural Association (AA).

However not all tree surgeons who work to a competent standard will be members of a professional organisation, but those who are can be expected to carry out work to a high standard.

Risk Assessment

Before commencing work on a site an appointed tree surgeon must have carried out a written risk assessment to identify any potential risks the operation may pose to the public, other users of the site and his own staff.

The assessment should record what measures have been taken to minimise the risks. The appointed tree surgeon should be able to show you the completed risk assessment on request.

And finally ...

Do consider obtaining more than one quote so that you can compare prices and ask for a written specification which includes a site-specific risk assessment. Remember that price may not be the only determining factor.

Do check with your local planning authority if you think your trees might be protected by a tree preservation order (TPO) or you are situated in a conservation area. You will need to obtain written consent from them before you can commence work on any protected trees.

Don't employ tree surgeons who advertise lopping and topping of trees. Bona fide tree surgeons do not carry out lopping and topping as they know it is harmful to trees and is not an acceptable form of surgery. Also avoid employing tree surgeons who call on spec or only offer a mobile phone number as a contact.



A lopped & topped tree

CONTACT DETAILS

Shropshire County Council can provide advice and details of reputable tree surgeons on request. An Approved List will be available in Spring 2005.

For further information:

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Other Sites

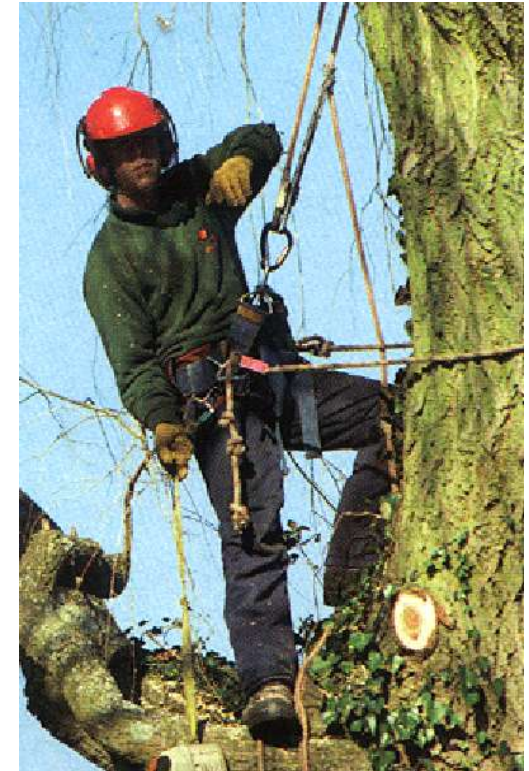
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CHOOSING THE RIGHT TREE SURGEON



Shropshire
COUNTY COUNCIL