



MAINTAINING SHADE TREES

Maintaining Shade Trees

Initial Maintenance

An agreement between the subdivider and the Board of Commissioners and approved by the Landscape and Shade Tree Commission, shall be required to provide for the maintenance of all such trees planted. The term of the Maintenance Agreement shall be twenty-four (24) months from the day the Township Engineer and the Township Manager give the developer the final approval on all required improvements identified in the Subdivision Improvements Agreement. During this term the developer shall: replace dead trees, control insects and diseases, repair mechanical injury, and remove all dead branches.

On-Going Maintenance

A tree's shape, strength and even its life span can be affected by careful pruning. A well-pruned tree will have a tall, straight trunk, a full and healthy crown and well-spaced branches. That means it will look good and provide lots of sheltering shade. But just as important, it will be better able to resist damage by wind and ice.

Ignore a tree, on the other hand, and you will have an eyesore that may resemble an overgrown rambling bush, rather than a groomed shade tree. Low-growing branches will threaten or gouge the person mowing the lawn, as well as pose traffic hazards if they obscure streets, driveways and sidewalks. Because of the tree's basic weakness damage from storms could be extensive.

The right time to prune is generally during dormancy because it will result in a vigorous burst of new growth in the spring. Some pruning can be done in the summer, after seasonal growth is complete. This type of pruning will slow branches you do not want or slow or dwarf the development of the tree or branch. Another reason to prune in summer is to get rid of defective limbs or limbs that hang too low under the weight of leaves. Fall is a good time to leave your pruning tools in storage because decay fungi spread their spores profusely in the fall and wounds heal more slowly on fall cuts.

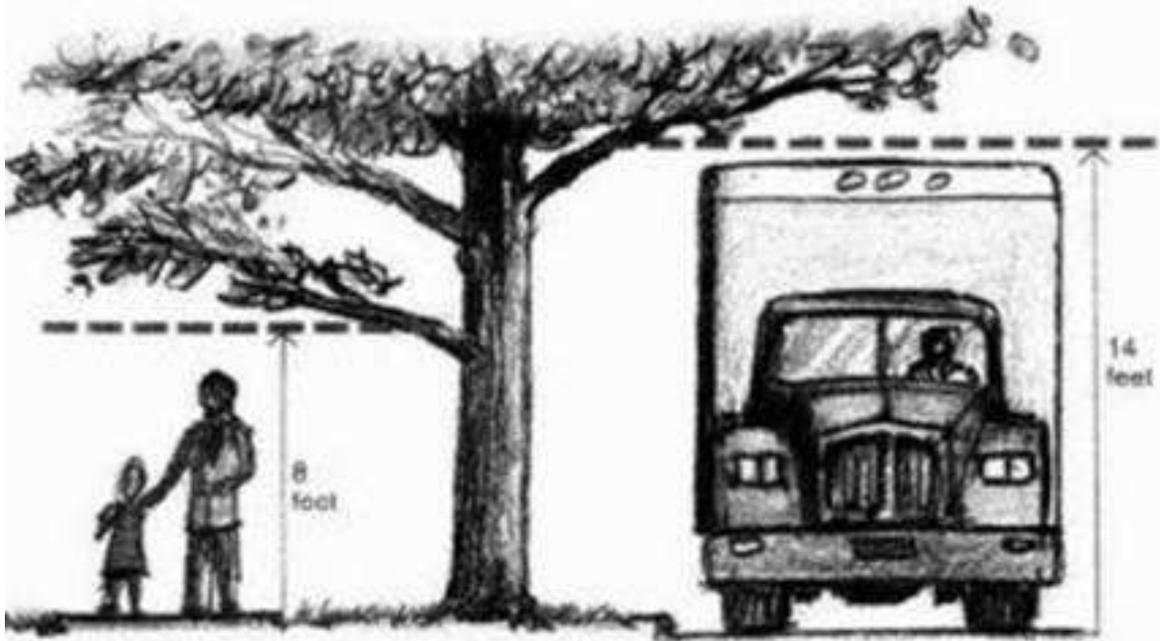
The purpose of the tree maintenance, which is performed by South Whitehall Township, is two-fold:

Hazard Reduction Pruning

Hazard reduction pruning is recommended when the primary objective is to reduce the danger to a specific target caused by visibly defined hazards in a tree.

Maintenance Pruning

Maintenance pruning is recommended when the primary objective is to maintain or improve tree health and structure, and includes hazard reduction pruning.



The property owner is responsible for the planting, removal and replacement of street trees. Street trees are to be trimmed so that branches are not to interfere with vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Branches are to be trimmed to no lower than fourteen (14) feet above the street and no lower than eight (8) feet above the sidewalk. The property owner has the option to trim the trees or let the Township do the trimming. The Township generally trims trees in the fall and/or winter and will issue a notice letter to property owners a week before trimming is scheduled. The Township cannot trim all trees annually and will usually schedule trimming on an as-needed basis.

Any and all work to be done on street trees requires a Shade Tree permit. There is no cost for this permit. Simply download a copy of the permit application, fill out the Shade Tree Permit Application and submit it to the Township. The application may be submitted by the property owner or an individual or company the property owner designates, such as a contractor or landscaper. The permit will be reviewed by the Zoning Officer, the Public Works Department and the Landscape and Shade Tree Commission.

The Landscape and Shade Tree Commission will make an effort to view the site and discuss the proposed work with the property owner. The review usually takes approximately two weeks, after which the applicant will be notified by telephone that the permit is ready for pick up. Depending upon the scope of work being done, the Township may add certain requirements as conditions of approval of the permit, such as replacing a removed street tree, requiring that a different species of tree be planted, or that a removed tree not be replaced at all. If trees are to be planted, the Public Works Department may require that they be notified prior to the planting of new trees so that they can mark the location of the trees so as not to interfere with underground utilities. The Landscape and Shade Tree Commission may also require prior notification so that they can view the planting to ensure that proper procedures are being followed.