

Denver Forestry Tree License Information

The City and County of Denver requires, by ordinance, a license for any business engaged in the care of trees and shrubs including all types of pruning and removal. The license requirement is for tree or shrub work for hire, including barter or trade of services. Standardized tree care licenses are issued in two categories: General (Large Tree) License and Ornamental (Small Tree) License.

A licensed company is required to have a minimum of one license holder (the licensee) representing the company. If the licensee leaves the company for any reason, that company is no longer licensed in the City and County of Denver until another representative fulfills the licensing requirements.

A fair amount of knowledge, experience, and expertise is required to skillfully and safely perform tree and shrub work. Denver Forestry supports the standards set forth by ANSI Z133 and ANSI Z300 and the International Society of Arboriculture's Arborist certification programs. Please read the following information carefully. This packet was composed as a general guide to follow. **We expect individuals to come into testing with acquired knowledge and experience in tree and shrub care.** If you have any questions, please call the Forestry Office at 720-913-0651.

Companies that already have a license (for tree and shrub work) in Aurora, Lakewood, Littleton, or Wheat Ridge do not have to test with Denver Forestry as a prerequisite for obtaining a license; however, these companies, like any company, must become licensed in Denver prior to performing tree and shrub work in the city. These companies still need to meet Denver's insurance requirements and pay the Excise and License fee. A copy of applicable regulations will be provided to all applicants along with the recommendation letter necessary for Excise processing. At the time of application, companies must submit a copy of their license from one of the above municipalities (no other cities' licenses are accepted).

Application and Testing Procedures

1. Contact Denver Forestry at 720-913-0651 to schedule an appointment for testing. Both written and field exams are required. Written exams are offered Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Field exams are offered the first and third Friday of each month, from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM.
2. Prior to testing, by ordinance, certificates of general liability, vehicle liability, and workers compensation insurance (in compliance with State Law) are required. Additionally, a \$50.00 fee must be paid to Excise and License, 201 West Colfax Avenue (the Wellington Webb Municipal Building), Dept. 206. A receipt from Excise and License must be provided to Denver Forestry before you may take your written exam. Denver Forestry's administrative offices are located in the same building, Dept. 605.
3. Examinations and review are by appointment only. A grade of at least seventy percent (70%) is required on both the written and field exams. Denver Forestry will accommodate those with reading and writing disabilities. The written exam must be passed prior to taking the field test. General knowledge of Denver's urban forest, proper pruning skills, common insect and disease problems, and basic tree biology will be covered on the exam.
4. The field exam includes a proficiency test and oral test covering tree identification, practical work competencies, and work-site safety (see listing below of common trees you may see during the field exam). General license applicants must provide a groundsperson, climbing/safety equipment, and be prepared to safety prune a large tree. Ornamental license applicants need to come prepared to prune a small tree or shrub.

General (Large Tree) License: Required for companies that intend to prune or remove any sized tree or shrub.

Ornamental License: Required for companies that intend to prune or remove small trees and shrubs, working from the ground only. The only circumstance under which a licensee in this category may leave the ground is to shear upright evergreens with a ladder (not exceeding the height of twelve feet).

Once you have satisfied insurance requirements and successfully passed both the written and field exams, the licensed company name, location, and contact information is placed on the list of contractors that Forestry maintains for citizen reference. Licensees must communicate ordinance responsibilities to their fellow employees. All workers are responsible for compliance with Denver ordinances, regulations, and permitting requirements.

Some common tree species you may need to identify during the field exam are below. You should be familiar with the common insect pests and diseases associated with the trees listed below, understanding that some trees have more problems than others do.

Common Name	Botanic Name	Common Name	Botanic Name	Common Name	Botanic Name
firs	<i>Abies spp.</i>	maples	<i>Acer spp.</i>	buckeyes & horsechestnuts	<i>Aesculus spp.</i>
catalpas	<i>Catalpa spp.</i>	hackberries	<i>Celtis spp.</i>	filberts	<i>Corylus spp.</i>
hawthorns	<i>Crataegus spp.</i>	Russian-olive	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	ash	<i>Fraxinus spp.</i>
ginkgo	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	honeylocust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	Kentucky coffeetree	<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>
junipers	<i>Juniperus spp.</i>	goldenraintree	<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>	apples & crabapples	<i>Malus spp.</i>
spruce	<i>Picea spp.</i>	pinus	<i>Pinus spp.</i>	sycamores & planetrees	<i>Platanus spp.</i>
Douglas-fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	pears	<i>Pyrus spp.</i>	oaks	<i>Quercus spp.</i>
Japanese pagodatree	<i>Styphnolobium japonicum</i>	lilacs	<i>Syringa spp.</i>	arborvitae	<i>Thuja spp.</i>
lindens	<i>Tilia spp.</i>	elms	<i>Ulmus spp.</i>		

Other trees may be included that are not listed above. The applicant should also be competent in the general identification of common landscape shrubs such as cotoneaster, potentilla, spirea, and others.

Licensing Test Topics

- Insects & Diseases
- Practical Tree Work Skills & Proficiencies
- Safety
- Tree Biology
- Tree Identification
- Tree Risk Assessment & Hazard Mitigation
- Work Techniques

Study Resources

Local laws & regulations: Denver Forestry – <http://www.denvergov.org/forestry> (click on the individual regulations in the publications section, lower-right portion of page)

Local tree & insect issues: Colorado State Extension – <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/pubs.html>

Insects that attack local trees: Colorado State Extension – http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/pubs.html#ins_trees

Pruning & Planning: University of Florida Horticulture – <http://hort.ufl.edu/woody/pruning/>

General Tree Care: International Society of Arboriculture – <http://www.treesaregood.org/>

Tree Identification: Utah State University tree browser –

<http://www.treebrowser.org/treeBrowser/usuTreeBrowser/index.html>