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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For immediate release through September 30, 2024

Residents urged to seek qualified tree contractors after July 24 storm

Local tree services are in high demand after July 24's devastating windstorm. The Urban Forestry Division strongly recommends residents hire trained professionals for any tree work, including trees on private property. Storm damage mitigation is the most dangerous tree work an arborist can undertake, says Urban Forestry Program Specialist Marie DuCharme.

DuCharme says it's imperative that property owners verify tree contractors have a business license and liability insurance to protect the contractor and those hiring them. "Compared to all industries, tree workers have at least 15 times the fatality rate and three times the nonfatal rate. Statistically, the work that arborists perform is so dangerous that when accidents occur, they are often fatal." (Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020 and 2018.)

Tree services treating City trees must have an International Society of Arboriculture-certified arborist on staff. Residents can verify a certified arborist's credentials on the ISA website: [Find an Arborist \(treesaregood.org\)](https://treesaregood.org).

City and County officials urge residents to hire professional tree contractors with proper training and safety equipment to prevent injury and property damage. "Using unlicensed and under-insured contractors for such dangerous work is a bad idea. This can lead not only to liability issues but also to catastrophic injury," says Nick Holloway, Deputy DES Coordinator for the Office of Emergency Management.

Residents may report storm-damaged trees in the City right-of-way (boulevard trees) at www.missoulaparks.org. City arborists prioritize trees that block the city right-of-way or represent significant safety hazards. Due to the unprecedented volume of debris resulting from the July 24 storm, non-emergency debris removal will take several weeks to complete. The Urban Forestry Division would like to thank residents for their patience and cooperation as our community navigates storm recovery.

Residents who need help with trees on private property may visit www.volunteermisoula.org to request assistance. Visit missoula.co/storm for up-to-date storm recovery information.

Due to the nature of the disaster, the Urban Forestry Division has suspended the permit system for boulevard trees that have already failed. If a tree in the City right-of-way requires removal or pruning to mitigate storm damage, contractors or property owners should contact the Urban Forestry Division at citytrees@ci.missoula.mt.us to obtain a tree maintenance permit.

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