

# LAWNMOWER DAMAGE PREVENTION

You could be a tree's worst enemy!



**Each year a large number of park trees are severely damaged by lawn maintenance equipment operated by the Parks Division. This damage is usually severe and repeated enough to kill a tree.**

Sadly, the scenes in the pictures above do not and should not have to happen because lawnmower damage is a 100% preventable problem. The damage depicted in the scenes above can easily be prevented by **keeping lawnmowers and string trimmers away from tree trunks.**

**A tree is damaged each and every time it is struck by lawn maintenance equipment.** The damage caused by lawn maintenance equipment is irreversible. Trees do not regenerate new tissue like humans when a wound occurs. Tree wounds caused by lawn maintenance equipment never heal and are often the cause of internal decay and rot found in older trees that survived the initial damage years ago. Trees grow from a thin layer of cells called the cambium. The cambium is found just under the bark of a tree. When a tree is damaged by a lawnmower or string trimmer the cambium is being damaged, thus impeding the ability of a tree to grow.

There are three underlying causes of lawnmower damage: lack of knowledge to the damage lawn maintenance equipment can do to trees, lack of accountability for the damage caused and lack of care when operating equipment around trees. The Forestry Division has enacted a lawnmower damage prevention program that addresses these three causes through prevention, protection and accountability.

## • Prevention

Prevention begins when lawn maintenance equipment operators are made aware of the potential damage they can cause when they operate their equipment irresponsibly around trees. Preventing lawnmower damage through staff education is easier and more cost effective than removing and replacing damaged trees.

## • Protection

Trees are being mulched and plastic trunk guards installed around many newly planted trees to provide protection against being struck by lawnmowers and string trimmers. The mulched area around a tree is a no equipment zone. Lawnmowers and string trimmers should not enter this area. Trunk guards and other protective measures lose their protective value when they are not respected and damaged. Their presence is not an invitation to operate equipment recklessly.

## • Accountability

Supervisors should monitor their mowing and trimming staff to assure trees are not being damaged. The Forestry Division has begun to survey parks for lawnmower damage. Reports containing the type and severity of damage, the monetary loss in having to remove and replace damaged trees and the specific locations will be submitted to the Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry and the Parks Commissioner for review.

**Careful and responsible equipment operation is the easiest and most effective way to prevent lawnmower damage. Not only is it your responsibility to see that the grass gets cut, but the trees survive as well.**

**PREVENTION STARTS WITH YOU!!!**



Put a **STOP** to Lawnmower damage. Trees everywhere are depending on you.

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Financial Assistance For Distribution  
Provided By The U.S. Forest Service

