



# Dead or Fallen Trees?

## What You Need to Know!

Throughout the year, Bethel Park Municipality receives numerous calls about dead and fallen trees in the community. If you have a tree that's fallen on your property, or if you see one down in the community, here are some guidelines to assist you.

*Please know that the Municipality's primary goal is to keep the community safe!*

### **TREE APPEARS DEAD?**

- \* The property owner will be asked to remove it before it falls and creates a hazard
- \* A letter to the property owner will be issued asking him/her to remove the dead tree (a reasonable amount of time is given to take care of it).
- \* Property owners can hire an arborist if they feel that the tree is healthy. If the arborist determines that the tree is healthy, it's removed off the Municipal books and may remain in place. To assist homeowners in finding an arborist, the Municipality has compiled a list for residents.

### **TREE BRANCHES BLOCKING ROADWAYS OR SIGHT LINES**

- \* The Municipality will ask the property owner to remove or cut back the branches to clear roads keeping them safe for drivers as well as Municipal workers to complete jobs such as paving roads and/ or snow plowing.
- \* In an emergency event, the Municipality will remove trees from the road, cut them to clear the roadway, place them on the property owner's lot, and then notify the owner that removal is necessary.

### **A TREE HAS FALLEN...WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?**

- \* Most insurance companies say that the responsibility of removing fallen trees is on the person whose land the tree falls on. For example, if a tree falls from your property onto your property, then it's your responsibility to remove it; however, if your neighbor's tree falls onto your property, it is still your responsibility to remove it (per the majority of insurance policies).

### **EASEMENTS AND RIGHT-OF-WAYS**

- \* Because the Municipality doesn't own the easement or right-of-way, it would be the property owner's responsibility to clear a tree on these locations
- \* An easement is a permanent right granted for a limited use of private land, normally for public purposes. The owner of the property shall have the right to make any other use of the land which is not inconsistent with the rights of the grantee (e.g. utility, drainage, and public access easements).
- \* A right-of-way is the total width of any land reserved or dedicated as a street, alley or crosswalk or for any other public or private purpose.

### **EMERGENCY EVENTS**

- \* During some storms, floods or other emergency situations, the Municipality's role is to keep roads open and allow residents to safely travel throughout the community. Therefore, if a tree falls and blocks the roadway, the Municipality will cut the tree in order to re-open a road and place the tree off the roadway onto the property or properties in the immediate area.

### **We're Here to Help You!**

For more information on tree ownership and dead trees, please contact **David Rudolph**, Bethel Park's Code Enforcement Officer, at 412-831-6800 x240 or [drudolph@bethelpark.net](mailto:drudolph@bethelpark.net)