



# Tool Box Talk

Focus on Performance

## Working Near Trees

Sust. 14

### What?

Construction activities can negatively affect trees. Damage to trunks and branches can lead to infection, severed roots can affect the tree's ability to draw up water and nutrients from the ground. Storage of plant and materials under trees can compress the soil and damage roots or limited availability of water.

### Why?

Trees support many kinds of wildlife, especially insects, and can provide food and shelter. Trees are also an important part of the landscape of a site; damage to trees which are planned to be retained reflects poorly on us as constructors.

Many trees in towns are considered to be an important part of the character of an area and are legally protected by Tree Preservation Orders or being within Conservation Areas.

### How?

- Check if a tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order. If a tree is protected, permission should be sought from the Local Authority before work can be undertaken to affect the tree.
- Check with your supervisor before removing trees or pruning branches.
- Avoid excavation under a tree's canopy if possible. If excavation is required, use hand tools to dig around tree roots.
- Protect exposed tree roots with sacking during cold weather.
- Avoid cutting roots over 25mm in diameter (width of your thumb) if possible.
- Prune roots which have to be removed using a sharp tool (e.g. secateurs or handsaw). Make a clean cut and leave as small a wound as possible.
- Avoid moving plant or vehicles and storing materials underneath tree canopies.
- If clearing trees next to residential areas, ensure neighbours are informed and consider leaving a screen of single trees in place if possible.



### Questions

1. What legal protection might a tree have?
2. How might you protect tree roots while digging?
3. Why shouldn't plant or materials be stored under tree canopies?

If you have any queries regarding the content of this tool box talk please contact your Sustainability Advisor or Line Manager.