

# Tree Hazards and Safety Issues

## What are the signs of a hazardous tree?

A hazardous tree is a tree, or a portion of a tree, that is in danger of falling and presents a threat to life, pedestrian safety, and derogation of infrastructures or property. Sometimes the hazard posed by a tree is obvious, such as when a tree is in visibly poor health or leaning precariously. Other times, serious conditions may exist that are not as obvious to the casual observer. The following are some conditions that may indicate a serious problem exists that may create a hazard to the surrounding environment.

1. Dead branches in the tree or on the ground near the tree.
2. Mushrooms near the base of the tree.
3. Excessive leaf loss or dead leaves in the crown (the upper portion) of the tree.
4. Areas of rotten wood or cavities.
5. Nearby trees have died or have significant damage.
6. Noticeable change in the leaning of the tree or a tree with a greater than 15% lean.
7. Unnatural heaving of the ground around the tree.
8. Damage to the ground surrounding the tree from construction, erosion or storms.

Additional information on hazardous trees can be found on the web at [www.USDA Forest Service.com](http://www.USDA Forest Service.com)

## What do I do if I see a possible hazardous tree?

If you are concerned about a hazardous tree situation, please consider the following options first.

1. If there is an immediate life-threatening tree hazard or a tree blocking a public road, call 911.
2. If there is a tree fallen across utility lines, please call the appropriate electrical company, such as The City of Columbia's Water & Light Department –(874-6205) or Boone Electric Cooperative (449-4181)
3. Stay away and never attempt to approach or touch trees or limbs that contact power lines, as they are considered extremely dangerous.

## Who handles hazardous tree situations in Columbia or Boone County?

The responsibility for hazardous trees on public property generally lies with the agency that owns or maintains the property. Listed below is contact information for hazardous trees on public and private property.

City of Columbia's Parks and Recreation Department (874-7201)

Public Works Street and Storm Water Maintenance Department (874-6289).

Boone County (886-4480)

## More Questions?

**Public Works 573-874-7250**

**Community Development 573-874-7474**