



# Trim Trees & Shrubs for Traffic Safety

Transportation Division

## Is It Time to Trim?

If vegetation poses an urgent hazard, trim now rather than waiting for the best time of year.

Proper pruning or trimming is important for the health of your trees and shrubs. The best time to plan your late-winter pruning strategy is while branches are bare.

The Arbor Day Foundation website provides tree trimming guidance, "Pruning during dormancy is the most common practice. It results in a vigorous burst of new growth in the spring and should be used if that is the desired effect. It is usually best to wait until the coldest part of winter has passed."

If you want to slow or dwarf the growth of trees and shrubs, prune in mid-summer.

In some cases tree and shrub removal may be the most practical way to remove the vegetation hazard.

## We Love Our Trees

Trees in the city provide many benefits. According to the Oregon Department of Forestry, trees lower levels of noise and dust, reduce temperature provide shade and increase property value. A healthy urban tree canopy provides measurable economic benefits and makes our city a beautiful place to live. But sometimes, trees near streets and sidewalks can grow into too much of a good thing and create a safety hazard.

Trees in The Dalles are cared for by citizens, not City staff, except in the Downtown Area. It is the owner's or occupant's responsibility to reduce the hazard when a tree on their property or on the right-of-way next to their property blocks public walkways and streets.

## Trim Trees & Shrubs for Traffic Safety

The City's General Ordinance 1067 directs property owners or occupants to maintain safe passage for vehicles and pedestrians. Also, be on the lookout for trees and shrubs that cause other traffic hazards such as blocking the driver's view at street corners or covering traffic control signs. General Ordinance 99-1234 requires property owners or occupants to remove vegetation that impairs traffic safety as well as dead or hazard trees that may cause a threat to persons or property.

## Tree & Shrub Trimming Requirements



**General Ordinance No. 1067** regulating street trees requires all trees growing near a sidewalk street or alley to be trimmed so that the limbs and branches are not less than nine (9) feet above the sidewalk and fourteen (14) feet above the street. These trim requirements allow safe passage for pedestrians on sidewalks as well as garbage trucks and school buses traveling on streets and alleys.

**General Ordinance No. 99-1234** requires vegetation that impairs the view of a public street or impairs the view of any traffic control device to be controlled or removed. These trim requirements allow vehicles to see oncoming traffic and obey traffic signs.

### Safe Tree Trimming

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration the most common tree trimming accidents are electrocution, falling from a tree or being struck by trees or limbs.

Take control of your own safety. Learn all you can. Purchase pruning and safety equipment.

If your trees or shrubs are growing into powerlines, do not attempt to prune or remove them yourself. Report the hazard tree to North Wasco County PUD. Fill out the tree trimming permit form available on their website. Trees can conduct electricity. So wait until the upper branches of the tree have been trimmed away from overhead power lines before pruning low branches.

When in doubt about trimming trees, hire a professional arborist.

**For more information visit the City website at [thedalles.org/streets](http://thedalles.org/streets) or contact the Public Works Department at (541) 296-5401.**