

## Enforcement of Licensing Requirements

The Maryland Forest Service is responsible for investigating complaints against individuals or companies providing tree care services. Licensed Tree Experts (LTEs) who violate the Maryland Tree Expert Law or fail to comply with applicable ANSI standards may face disciplinary actions, including suspension or revocation of their license.

Unlicensed individuals or businesses that perform or advertise tree care services without a valid license are subject to criminal prosecution. Please note that the Maryland Forest Service does not have the authority to mandate financial restitution; customers seeking refunds must pursue civil action through their local court system.

To file a complaint against a licensed or unlicensed tree care provider, you must complete the official complaint form available on the Maryland Forest Service website. Be sure to provide as much detail as possible; anonymous complaints cannot be investigated.

The facilities of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, physical or mental disability.

This document is available in alternative format upon request from a qualified individual.

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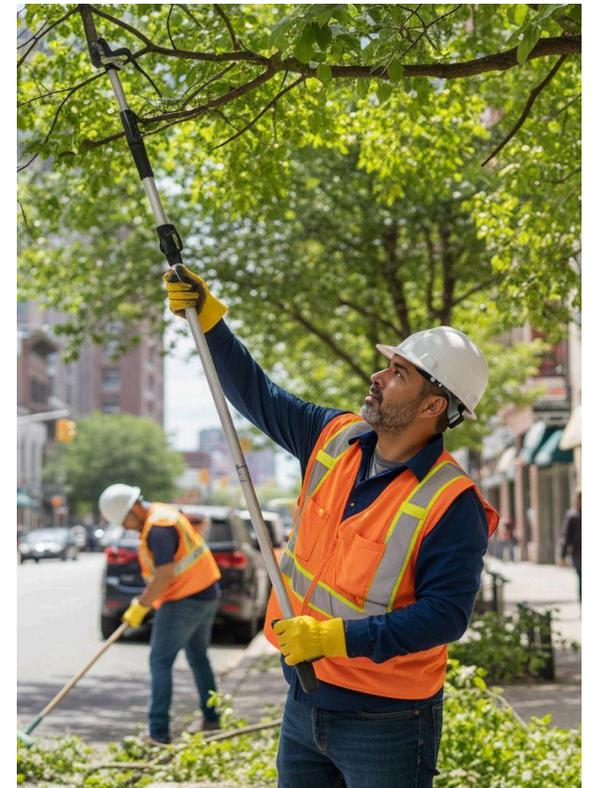
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# Licensed Tree Experts



## Who is a Licensed Tree Expert?

A Licensed Tree Expert (LTE) is a professional with education and experience in arboriculture, trained to assess tree health and perform services such as diagnosis, treatment, pruning, cabling, and removal. LTEs help ensure public safety, promote tree health, and support sustainable tree management across Maryland.

## Why Licensing is Required

Maryland law requires anyone advertising or performing tree care for hire—including removal—to hold a Tree Expert License from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. This includes individuals using titles such as arborist, tree surgeon, or tree specialist.

Licensing helps protect property owners by ensuring quality work, reducing risk, and supporting long-term tree health.

## When a License is NOT Required

A Licensed Tree Expert is not required for:

- Work on trees under 20 feet tall
- Commercial logging or timber harvesting
- Installation of underground utilities or related site work

These exemptions allow routine development and forestry work to proceed without licensing.

## How to become a Licensed Tree Expert

To qualify for the LTE exam, applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years old; and
- Have two years of college in a forestry-related field plus one year under a licensed LTE, or
- Have three years of supervised work under a licensed LTE

Once qualifications are approved, candidates may take the licensing exam administered by the Maryland Forest Service. Proof of insurance is required before the license is issued.

## Tips for Hiring a Tree Care Company in Maryland

When selecting a tree care company, protect your property and investment by following these best practices:

- **Ask for Their Maryland Licensed Tree Expert (LTE) Number.** Maryland law requires all LTEs to display their license number on trucks, proposals, contracts, and advertisements.
- **Verify Their License Status.** Confirm the LTE is licensed and in good standing by visiting the Maryland Forest Service's website.
- **Request Proof of Insurance.** Ask for a current certificate of insurance, including liability and workers' compensation coverage.
- **Ask Questions.** Have the company explain how they plan to perform the work. Inquire about their approach, safety measures, and equipment.
- **Check References.** Request references

from recent clients and follow up to ensure they were satisfied with the service.

- **Avoid Companies That Promote Tree Topping.** Tree topping is a harmful and outdated practice. Reputable professionals will not recommend it.
- **Get Multiple Estimates.** Obtain at least two or three written estimates to compare pricing, scope, and professionalism.
- **Demand a Written Contract.** The contract should clearly outline the work to be performed, the total cost, payment terms, and a cleanup plan (e.g., brush and stump removal).
- **Don't Pay Upfront in Full.** Never pay the full amount before the job is completed to your satisfaction and as outlined in the contract.
- **Ensure Compliance with Standards.** LTEs in Maryland must follow professional standards and ethics as defined in COMAR 08.07.07 and adhere to ANSI A300 standards for tree care.

By taking these steps, you help ensure that your trees receive professional care and that your property is protected.

**To find more information about Licensed Tree Experts or to locate one that works in your county, please visit our website at:**

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests>