



CONNECTICUT TREE WARDENS

Trees are invaluable assets to society and the environment, providing a wide range of ecological, social, and economic benefits essential for Connecticut towns and cities. They act as natural air filters to improve air quality, contribute to the overall aesthetic quality of public spaces, and reduce energy costs by providing shade in the summer. While trees offer significant benefits, they also present considerable risks for municipalities.

One significant concern is the potential for property damage, as falling branches or toppling trees during storms can result in costly repairs to buildings, vehicles, and infrastructure. Furthermore, the potential for pedestrians, cyclists, or motorists to sustain personal injuries from falling trees or branches highlights the necessity of thorough tree maintenance and inspection. Diseased or decaying trees can harbor pests or pathogens that may spread to other trees or pose health risks to community members. Municipalities can implement proactive measures like regular inspections and maintenance programs to mitigate these exposures through collaboration with their tree warden.

Each municipality is required to have a tree warden. Tree wardens are designated public officials responsible for the management of trees located along public roads and in public areas, excluding those situated on state-owned land or managed by a park commission. Their duties include granting approval for tree planting, pruning, or removal within their jurisdiction.

Tree Warden Qualifications

Each Connecticut city and town must appoint a qualified individual as a tree warden or deputy tree warden, who, within one year of their appointment, must meet the qualifications outlined in [Connecticut General Statute \(CGS\) 23-59a](#). This statute aims to ensure that municipalities uphold, nurture, and safeguard a valuable and essential natural asset: trees owned by the municipality. A “qualified” individual is defined as an individual who:

- Has completed the Tree Wardens Association of Connecticut coursework outlined in CGS; or
- Is a licensed arborist in Connecticut.

Individuals who do not meet these requirements are not eligible for reappointment.

Connecticut residents enjoy a voluminous tree population, paying little mind to the havoc they can cause should a crisis arise. Only some realize the upkeep needed for trees under public ownership, and the multitude of benefits they bestow tends to go unnoticed. The municipal tree warden ensures that public trees are adequately maintained, removed if deemed hazardous, and replaced. This significant role demands extensive tree biology, maintenance, and public affairs knowledge. A well-informed tree warden proficient in arboriculture, tree biology, structure and function, pest management, pruning techniques, tree selection, planting procedures, meeting organization, public relations, and tree legislation will execute their duties effectively.

In Connecticut, the municipal tree warden plays a pivotal role in any city or town’s community forestry program, arguably its most indispensable human component. While it’s common knowledge that state law mandates the appointment of a tree warden in each municipality, there are prevalent misunderstandings about the position beyond this requirement. Without a well-qualified and proactive tree warden’s active participation and, quite possibly, the leadership, a Connecticut community cannot effectively execute its community forestry program.

Additional Resources

[Tree Wardens of Connecticut Map](#)

Find your tree warden using an interactive map maintained and updated by Connecticut’s Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Urban Forestry. The map includes the municipal tree warden’s:

- Name
- Title
- Department
- Phone Number
- Email
- Address
- Municipal Website



Additional Resources - *continued*

[Tree Warden's Association of Connecticut](#)

The Tree Wardens' Association of Connecticut, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating tree wardens and others about tree warden's roles and responsibilities through education, professional development, and advocacy.

[Arborist License](#)

An arborist license is required for persons advertising, soliciting, or contracting to do arboriculture in Connecticut. As defined in the arborist law, "arboriculture means any work done for hire to improve the condition of fruit, shade, or ornamental trees by feeding or fertilizing, or by pruning, trimming, bracing, treating cavities or other methods of improving tree conditions, or protecting trees from damage from insects or diseases or curing these conditions by spraying or any other method."

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant.