

A Tree Falls ... What Should You Do?

Heavy, wet snow and strong winds like those experienced in our most recent storms are the perfect recipe for bringing down trees. How to handle a downed tree is not something you think of until it happens to you.

First and foremost, make sure you are safe. If the tree brings down wires or falls near wires, **DO NOT GO NEAR IT** until the utilities have had a chance to clear the wires. If a tree falls on your home, leave the structure if you are able to until it is deemed safe to return. Contact the Police Department via 9-1-1 and they will help you assess the situation and contact appropriate response agencies.

If a tree falls in your yard or in a creek or waterway that runs through or alongside your property, removal of the tree is the responsibility of the property owner. If you do not have the ability to remove the tree yourself, contact an arborist.

If a tree falls in your yard or creek and brings wires down with it, the utility responsible for the wires will need to clear them from the tree before the tree can be removed. If you contact the Cheltenham Township Public Works Department at 215-635-4600, they will help you identify the appropriate utility. Once the utility has cleared the wires, removal of the tree is the responsibility of the property owner.

If a tree falls in a street, contact the Cheltenham Township Public Works Department at 215-635-4600 (or the Police Department via 9-1-1 after hours). Public Works will determine whether the road needs to be closed, contact the utility company(ies) if downed wires are involved, and then clear the tree out of the street in order to reopen the roadway. The Township's responsibility is to ensure roadways are clear to ensure traffic can safely pass. The Township will typically clear the street and pile branches and/or logs on the side of the road. Removal of the tree and/or debris is the responsibility of the property owner.

The take away message is this: If a tree located on your property falls, you are responsible for removing it, regardless of where it lands. One of the best ways to reduce damage and inconvenience of a downed tree is to contact an arborist on a routine basis to have your trees evaluated and maintained.

Important Note about Damages: If a downed tree causes damage to your vehicle or property, contact your insurance company. If your neighbor's tree falls on your property, you will need to work with your neighbor and/or insurance company to clean up the fallen tree and/or repair the damage. The Township does not mediate neighbor disputes for damages caused by trees.



Some Ways to Get Rid of Branches and/or Debris from Downed Trees:

1. Schedule a special collection with the Public Works Department at 215-635-4600. Schedule your appointment **BEFORE** placing material at the curb. Note: Collections will not be scheduled during the Fall Leaf Collection Program.

For a minimum \$15 charge, crews will collect:

- Large branches - maximum 8' long and 4" in diameter in one pile not to exceed 4' x 4' x 8'
- Small branches - up to eight tied bundles of small branches and twigs not to total over 4' long and 2' in diameter.

If material exceeds the above limit, the Highway Superintendent will affix additional charges increasing in \$15 increments.

2. Drop material off at the Waverly Road Compost Facility, located on Waverly Road between Cheltenham Avenue and Morgan Lane. The facility is generally open weekdays from 7:30AM to 3PM and Saturdays from 10AM to 2PM. *Dumping material in front of the gates when the facility is closed is prohibited.*
3. Place small branches and debris in biodegradable bags during scheduled bagged garden debris collection times.

Please note that Public Works will **NOT** accept the following items:

- branches with diameters greater than 4"
- logs
- firewood
- bushes
- tree stumps.