Tree Law

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The Vermont Legislature updated the laws governing trees in public ways and places with the enactment of Act 171, which took effect in November 2020. The Act makes substantial changes to Vermont's tree laws, including defining the term "shade tree" and increasing the role of municipal officers in the oversight and maintenance of trees in public ways and places. Other amendments define how trees may be removed and the methods by which they are managed on both public and private land. 24 V.S.A Ch. 67. Please also review "New Tree Warden Laws in Effect" about Act 171, first published in the May/June edition of the VLCT Journal.

VLCT and the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program have compiled information to assist municipal officials in navigating their new legal roles and responsibilities related to trees and roadside vegetation. Tree wardens, highway staff, local committees, and governance boards will find the following reference materials extremely valuable as they navigate expanded responsibilities related to tree and urban forest planning and management.



(opens in a new tab)

The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program is a joint compact between the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and the UVM Extension. They have a webpage specifical for Municipal Assitance. The mission of the program is "[t]o lead citizens, businesses, and governments in understanding the value of urban and community forests and to promote civic responsibility for and participation in the stewardship of these resources for this and future generations." To that end, the program provides training, and financial assistance and a myriad of resources to assist with the effective stewardship of community forests.

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