

Roadside Tree Removal



There are times when the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) must trim or remove healthy trees from the public road right-of-way. There are a number of good reasons to do this work.

Safety

Trees are an important part of any community but they can also be very dangerous to drivers along the road. Here are some of the dangers of roadside trees:

- **Vehicle Collisions** - Between 2007 and 2016 there were 2,105 injury and fatal crashes in Washtenaw County from drivers leaving the road and hitting a fixed object, a majority of these objects were trees. Clearing trees from the public road right-of-way gives drivers a recovery area if they make a mistake and can help prevent these crashes.
- **Sight Distance** - As trees grow, they can block the driver's view at intersections. Limited visibility can cause drivers to pull out in front of other drivers and pedestrians causing crashes.
- **Sign Visibility** - Trees can also block road signage, causing confusion and danger for drivers and pedestrians.
- **Storm Damage** - When trees are too close to the road and they are damaged by a storm (for example: wind, ice or lightning) they can fall into the road. This can cause traffic delays, crashes or even death.
- **Overhanging Branches** - Low overhanging limbs may impede taller vehicles travel, including fire trucks, farm equipment, school buses and WCRC maintenance vehicles. This situation is potentially even more dangerous when branches are heavy with snow or ice, the limbs can fall closer to the road causing damage to equipment, injury or even death.



Road Condition

Here are some of the ways that roadside trees hurt road surfaces:

- **Shade** - The shade from roadside trees helps hold water on roads. Standing water can cause a lot of damage to gravel, asphalt and concrete roads. Sometimes WCRC will remove or trim healthy trees to open a road surface to the sky. If sunshine can get to the road, it will dry out faster and prevent water damage.
- **Drainage** - Drainage is very important to the road system, a properly drained road will last much longer. Sometimes as trees and roots grow, they can damage or block drainage systems.
- **Root Damage** - Tree roots can extend for 10's of feet beyond the trunk. If the tree is too close to the road, roots can disturb road beds and road surfaces.



Winter Maintenance

Trees that are growing too close to the road can also cause trouble during the winter. When there are too many obstructions just off the road, there is no room for WCRC snow plows to push the snow. Removing some of the vegetation, including trees, can provide a safer road in the winter.

Still have Questions? Contact WCRC

Phone: (734) 761-1500

email: wcrc@wcroads.org

Facebook/Twitter: [@washtenawroads](https://www.facebook.com/washtenawroads)