

Protecting Trees in the Adelaide Park Lands During Events

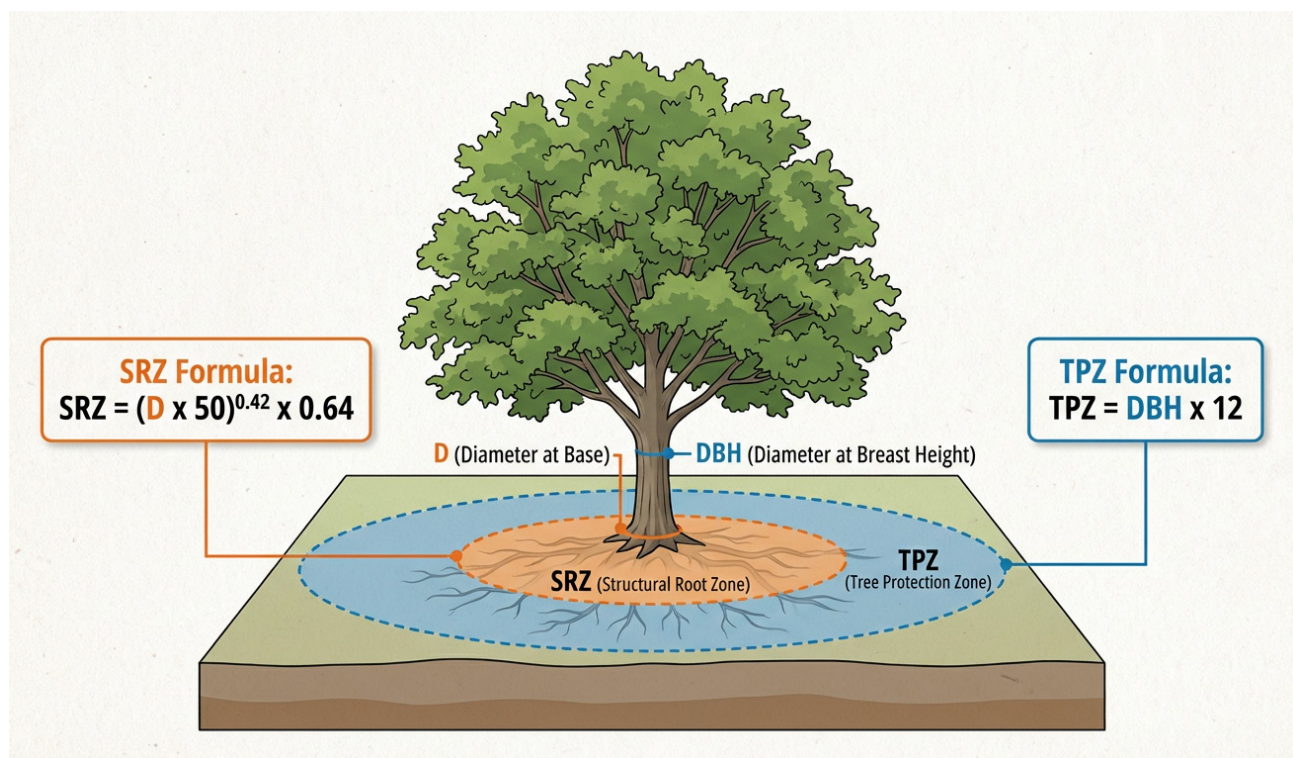
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Protecting Trees in the Adelaide Park Lands During Events

Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to outline the operating practices that event organisers must follow to protect trees while holding events in the City of Adelaide Park Lands.

Background

Healthy trees are essential to the character and amenity of event spaces, but they are highly vulnerable to damage from soil compaction and wound related disease. These impacts can result from plant and vehicle movements, infrastructure installation, and high volumes of pedestrian traffic.

Extreme weather conditions can cause any tree to drop limbs, so we would ask the community to be aware of this when in the general vicinity of large trees. City of Adelaide recommends that event staff and patrons are advised to avoid the areas under trees, particularly during extreme weather events such as High winds or extreme heat.

Tree health decline can also contribute to tree failures such as limb and branch losses or the failure of entire trees. By protecting tree health, event organisers are directly supporting safety at their event sites.

By following this guideline, event organisers can reduce risk to tree health and support Adelaide's tree canopies being protected into the future, an important climate action for our community.

Tree Protection Zones and Structural Root Zones

The Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) is the area around a tree needed to maintain its overall health, protecting roots and soil from disturbance or compaction. The TPZ is calculated using the trunk diameter measured at standard height (1.4m above ground).

Within the TPZ, the Structural Root Zone (SRZ) is the smaller critical area immediately around the trunk that maintains the tree's structural stability and must never be disturbed. The SRZ also uses the tree's diameter, measured above the root buttress flare.

Zone	Purpose	Formula	Minimum	Maximum
TPZ	Protects tree health	$DSH \times 12$	2.0 m	15.0 m (typical)
SRZ	Protects tree stability	$(D \times 50)^{0.42} \times 0.64$	1.5 m	None

Event Planning

To ensure tree health and protection, during event planning, event organisers should refer to:

1. City of Adelaide supplied [maps](#) to identify TPZs and SRZs within the location you are planning to hold your event
2. This Guideline
3. The current Tree Inspection Report for the event site.

When designing an event layout, event organisers must:

- Understand City of Adelaide advice that:
 - o Trees are dynamic, living organisms and as such cannot be classified as safe or structurally sound under all circumstances.
 - o City of Adelaide recommends that event staff and patrons are advised to avoid the areas underneath trees, particularly during extreme weather events such as high winds or extreme heat. City of Adelaide recommends that event design minimises congregation under trees.
 - o Event organisers are required to perform their own risk assessments when holding events in the Park Lands. Risk from tree failures to people and infrastructure and risk to tree health from events should be considered as part of the event's risk assessment and event planning.

- Design sites to prevent congregation of people within TPZs of trees identified as having a moderate or above risk rating according to the current Tree Inspection Report for the site.
- Design to avoid vehicle and plant movement and infrastructure placement within TPZs for any trees identified as having a moderate or above risk rating, according to the current Tree Inspection Report for the site.
- Design to ensure lighting and other attachments are not attached to or resting on trees identified as having a moderate or above risk rating according to the current Tree Inspection Report for the site.
- Understand that encroachment of any equipment, infrastructure, vehicles or plant movement into more than 10% of a TPZ cannot occur without the approval of City of Adelaide Arboriculture team. This includes attaching anything to a tree or resting anything on a tree.
- Understand that if activity within more than 10% of a TPZ is unavoidable, tree protection techniques must be proposed and approved by City of Adelaide as part of the event's Site Care Plan, before occurring.
- Understand that ground disturbance (ie pegging or trenching) within a SRZ must never occur. Ground disturbance within a TPZ must only occur with City of Adelaide approval.

Scan to go to Maps



Event Site Care Planning for the Protection of Trees

The following controls are examples of some common tree protection measures that an event may incorporate into a Site Care Plan for City of Adelaide's consideration:

Basic minimum needs

- Trees need enough sunlight, fresh air, and water to stay healthy and grow.
- Appropriate watering must be maintained during an event's occupancy to ensure trees do not become dehydrated. Continuing turf irrigation during an event occupancy will be adequate for some trees. For younger trees in particular, a dedicated watering schedule facilitated by the event for the particular tree may be necessary.

Vehicle & Plant Movement within a TPZ

- Vehicles and plant should not encroach on TPZs where possible as this contributes to compaction and introduces risk of damaging trunks or branches. Disease is often borne at the site of a wound.
- Plant and larger vehicles in particular require spotters or escorts to guide them safely and protect the trunk or overhead branches/limbs.
- For any vehicle movement inside a SRZ, heavy vehicles and plant must install a temporary road or track mats in line with AS4970:2025 – Protection of trees on development sites, for example LD20 atop mulch with geotextile membrane underneath mulch.

Ground Protection to support Vehicle & Plant Movement within a TPZ

- Ground protection or track mats must be of suitable load-bearing capacity.
- City of Adelaide recommends installing mats on top of geotextile fabric, with a 100 mm mulch layer if required to spread load.
- Mats left in place for longer than seven days should be perforated to allow air and water exchange or periodically lifted to allow the

same. Where a suitable product cannot be sourced by the event, City of Adelaide may explore if this could be offset with a tree treatment and watering schedule.

Infrastructure and equipment storage

- All structures must sit above existing soil levels (ie no excavation/staking). In some instances, some limited ground disturbance may be approved within a TPZ but never within a SRZ. City of Adelaide will undertake a risk assessment of any proposal to undertake ground disturbance within a TPZ before confirming approval or otherwise.
- Structures should be elevated, for example mounted on blocks to allow airflow and access for water.
- Posts for marquees and similar should sit on load-spreading plates.

Lighting and other attachments

- Objects must not be attached directly to trees where they could wound bark.
- Objects must not be attached or leaning on trees identified as having a moderate or above risk rating according to the current Tree Inspection Report for the site.
- Subject to approval, lighting strings may be installed in the lower third of sturdy branches, secured with wide fabric/webbing straps.
- Signs, cabling, art or lights may only be installed with City of Adelaide approval and must include protective wrapping or approved slings.
- Bracing/tying off tents to a tree is not permitted.
- Rigging of purpose-built infrastructure (ie climbing infrastructure or suspended stretch tents) may be considered by City of Adelaide, subject to City of Adelaide arborist review, risk assessment and supporting detailed engineering provided by the event.

Other considerations

- Use perforated compaction mats or raised decking with gaps that facilitate airflow and water penetration in high-use areas such as food stalls, serving points, toilets, pedestrian corridors and restocking zones.
- Protect newly planted trees with sturdy physical barriers.
- Events must ensure infrastructure and vehicles/ plant remain within approved layouts.
- Damage must be reported immediately to City of Adelaide. Council will assess any damage and direct remedial actions. All costs associated with damage to trees are the responsibility of the event organisers and may amount to tens of thousands of dollars.
- Where an event or part of an event is subject to Development Approval, the event organiser will be required to obtain a Tree Protection Plan developed by an Australian Qualification Framework Level 5 Diploma Arboriculture or equivalent in line with AS4970:2025 – Protection of trees on development sites. This only applies for the component subject to Development Approval which intercepts with a Notional Root Zone or Tree Protection Zone.
- The City of Adelaide may consider varying requirements where supported by site-specific advice from an AQF Level 5 (Diploma of Arboriculture) Arborist. Any resolution to vary or maintain requirements is the decision of City of Adelaide.

Risk from trees

Trees naturally pose some risk – branches and limbs or entire trees can fail.

The City of Adelaide undertakes a rigorous inspection regime of trees in the Adelaide Park Lands using the Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) methodology for tree assessments. This produces a qualitative risk rating: Low, Moderate, High or Extreme to each tree.

Risk Level Definitions

Low Risk Tree

A tree or tree part with:

- Low likelihood of failure and impact, and
- Negligible or minor consequences if it does fail.

Management:

- Mitigation generally not required.
- Routine monitoring or simple maintenance may be adequate.

Moderate Risk Tree

Occurs when:

- Likelihood of failure and impact is somewhat likely
- Likelihood is low but consequences are significant
- Likelihood is higher but consequences are minor.

Management:

- Mitigation may be advisable depending on risk tolerance.
- Monitoring, pruning, or partial mitigation may be appropriate.

High Risk Tree

Applies when:

- Likelihood of failure and impact is likely or very likely
- Consequences are significant to severe.

Management:

- Mitigation is recommended.
- Action should be prioritized to reduce risk (pruning, target removal, structural support or removal/isolation).

While the qualitative ratings guide decision-making, they do not guarantee outcomes.

Trees are dynamic, living organisms and as such cannot be classified as safe or structurally sound under all circumstances.

City of Adelaide recommends that event staff and patrons are advised to avoid the areas under trees, particularly during extreme weather events such as high winds or extreme heat.

The indicative 'fall zone' of any tree is 1.5 times the height of a tree.

Event organisers are required to perform their own risk assessments when holding events in the Adelaide Park Lands. Risk from tree failures to people and infrastructure and risk to tree health from events should be considered as part of the event's risk assessment.

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