

# Dead or Dying Ash Trees

Ash trees infested with Emerald Ash borers become dry and brittle which causes their branches to break more easily than a healthy tree branch. Thousands of Ash trees in the township are dead or dying which might present hazards of falling limbs and eventually the entire tree toppling.

Landowners are responsible for maintaining the trees on their property, including trees on property easements designated as right of way. Legally, property owners have two duties: make reasonable inspections and ensure that the trees are not dying or rotted, representing hazards.

Under New Jersey law, the ownership of a tree is determined by the trunk location. Trees that are in the right of way for township or county roads are still the responsibility of the property owner, not the township or county. This means that dead and hazardous trees located near sidewalks or streets that might inflict harm on pedestrians or cars must be taken care of by their owners, and it is not the township's responsibility to remove them. Owners of such trees should monitor them, taking the proper measures of trimming and/or removal as needed.

It is highly recommended that homeowners contact a professional tree service to trim or remove any standing dead tree, particularly if the tree is near any power lines.

Removing dead trees along our township roads might help reduce unexpected power outages to you and your neighbors, as well as reduce the risk of damage or injury to road travelers. Remember, falling branches or trees can occur any time, not just during bad weather.

Residents should be aware that any known dead tree that falls from their property onto another property (or road) that causes damage to another's property or person, will result in their being held liable from an insurance perspective.

Easements give utilities and local governments the right to maintain vegetation, including pruning and removal of trees and shrubs.

See <https://www.firstenergycorp.com/help/safety/trees/homeowner-rights-responsibilities.html> for more information.

Crews are continuing a multi-year effort to identify and remove deteriorated ash trees that have been affected by the Emerald Ash Borer. Nearly 20,000 dead and dying ash trees have been removed in JCP&L's service area, primarily in northern New Jersey, since the initiative began in 2017.

Trees that represent hazards and cannot be taken down without potential damage to power lines should be reported to the power company at [https://www.firstenergycorp.com/service\\_requests/report-tree-problem.html](https://www.firstenergycorp.com/service_requests/report-tree-problem.html).

Homeowners should contact JCP&L by phone or through their website to report a standing dead tree that is close to JCP&L's power lines. A representative will inspect the tree and determine if it needs immediate attention before the next scheduled trimming cycle. However, JCP&L will only address dead trees that are within 10' of their pole to pole power lines along our roads. Homeowners will be responsible for removal of dead trees located near the power line that runs between a street utility pole and the owner's home.

For hazardous situations over township sidewalks or roadways not involving power lines, please notify the township's Department of Public Works at [dpw@knowlton-nj.com](mailto:dpw@knowlton-nj.com) or call 908-496-4265.

**To report outages in your area please call 1-888-LIGHTSS (1-888-544-4877)**