



Ice and Snow Storm Response

Tree Damage Guidance for Municipalities and Counties

With the forecast of a potential ice event in Maryland, LGIT is sharing this guidance to support local government response efforts and help reduce injuries, property damage, and liability related to storm-damaged trees.

Ice storms can cause significant damage to public trees and rights-of-way. Heavy ice can break large limbs, uproot trees, and create dangerous conditions during and after the storm.

Immediate Response

During and immediately following an ice storm, response should be limited to emergency responders, public works staff, and trained professionals. Ice storms often create serious hazards, including:

- Downed or live electrical wires
- Hanging or fallen tree limbs
- Split or uprooted trees that may fail
- Slippery conditions that increase fall risk

Restrict access to affected areas when possible and coordinate closely with utility providers. If a situation presents an immediate public safety risk, prioritize response and follow established emergency procedures.

Post-Storm Assessment and Cleanup

Initial damage may appear worse than it is. When conditions allow:

- Do not rush removal decisions unless there is an immediate safety concern
- Evaluate damage systematically from top to bottom and around the tree
- Document conditions before and during cleanup activities
- Use qualified and properly insured contractors

Large or structurally compromised trees should be evaluated by a licensed arborist. Some trees may recover over time, while others may require removal due to safety concerns.

Ongoing Monitoring and Planning

Trees that remain after an ice storm should be monitored for delayed structural issues, decay, or disease. Municipalities and counties may also wish to review storm response operations and identify opportunities to improve preparedness, communication, and mitigation for future ice events.