

Who is Responsible for This Tree?

Understanding Public and Private Trees



Illustrative example—not a survey. The red line represents the hypothetical property/right of way boundary. A tree's apparent position relative to the house, sidewalk, or pavement does not by itself establish ownership.

Important: Private Tree Responsibility

The Town of Sudbury is not responsible to trim or remove a privately owned tree.

If the tree is on private property, routine maintenance, pruning, and removal are the responsibility of the property owner.

What Should a Property Owner Do?

If the tree is on private property:

- The tree is the responsibility of the property owner.
- Monitor the tree's condition, arrange routine pruning and tree care, and remove it when necessary.

If the tree is within the public right-of way:

- It may be a public shade tree.
- Contact the Department of Public Works before pruning, cutting, or removing it.

If you are unsure if a tree is public or private:

- Check the recorded plan / survey or contact the Town for guidance before performing any work.

Questions?

Contact the Sudbury Department of Public Works
Tel: 978-440-5421 Email: dpw@sudbury.ma.us

Important: Other laws, bylaws, permits, easements, construction projects, wetland requirements, or other legal authorities may apply in specific circumstances. When in doubt, contact the appropriate town department before work is performed.