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Construction Impacts on Existing Trees

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Construction can have a significant impact on trees existing on a site. The effect of root disturbance may become evident during the construction phase but often it shows up years later. Decline can be gradual because conditions have been created that encourages low vigor and increases susceptibility to insect and disease problems.

Planning

Frequently tree care professionals are requested to visit a construction site *after* tree damage has occurred and are then asked to save the trees. Often there is no way to save these trees. The planning phase is the time to begin the process of successfully preserving trees on a construction site. Communicate how the impact of construction activity can be cumulative to the trees involved.

Protection

Develop site specifications that can be followed to protect the trees from the impact of site disturbance. For specifications to be effective, an emphasis needs to be made that it is the responsibility of all parties, in all phases of the construction process, to protect the trees designated to be saved.

Post-construction

After construction is completed, monitor trees for signs of low vigor. Success is measured by trees thriving over the long term, 5-10 years after project completion. If needed, utilize methods to aid in reducing the construction impact on the trees. When the decline becomes quite noticeable, it is often too late to reverse or even reduce the damage to the tree.