

Writing Specifications Using ANSI A300: It's Easier than You Think

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Standards of practice comprise the heart of any profession and arboriculture is no exception. The ANSI A300 standards are developed through a consensus process that welcomes involvement for industry professionals.

Developing pruning specifications based on A300 standards will ensure that the arborist and the tree owner have a clear plan for how the work will be performed. The standards should be easy to use and understand and ultimately should improve the management of trees.

A primary purpose for A300 standards is to standardize the way specifications are written in the United States. To simply say "our work meets A300 standards," or to make your bid specification say "prune trees to A300 standards," is merely referencing them. Using the standards from a process perspective to develop a specification is proper use of the standard.

Currently there are eleven standard parts in various forms of completion. These other standard parts include pruning, soil management, supplemental support systems, lightning protection systems, construction management, planting and transplanting, root management, risk assessment, integrated pest management, and urban forest products. This presentation will focus on part one pruning.

Writing pruning specifications using A300 standards

Good pruning specifications using A300 standards begin with objectives. Objectives for why tree pruning activities are occurring should be clear and presented in a language that arborist and non-arborist alike can understand. The objectives are the product, so clearly establishing them up front is the foundation of the process.

Traditional examples of punning objectives that tree owners are willing to invest in include risk reduction, aesthetic improvement, size reduction, preservation, and investment management. Some non-conventional objectives include fire prevention, reducing rodent access to buildings, and security enhancement.

Once objectives are determined, we then need to define what actions will occur to meet these objectives. These actions could include thinning, reduction, crown cleaning, or shearing.

Now with clear objectives and the actions established, we need to define where these activities will occur. In the top, on one side, throughout the tree canopy?

Pruning specifications using A300 standards will clearly define dosage. Measurements of dosage could include a percentage, distance from something, size of branch to meet the defined objective.

If all these elements exist, we have a clear specification for pruning using the A300 part 1 standard. Tree owners and arborists benefit mutually through clearly defined specifications.