

Why hire a certified arborist?

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The International Society of Arboriculture, a nonprofit organization supporting tree care research around the world, offers the only internationally-recognized certification program in the industry. Certification is a voluntary program, and credential holders do not have to be ISA members to seek and maintain ISA certification. ISA has been educating, testing and certifying arborists for more than a decade in order to improve the level of overall knowledge and to develop and implement standardized tree care practices.

Although certification can attest to an individual's tree care knowledge and competence, it cannot guarantee quality performance. However, there are a number of economic and credibility reasons that support public works directors hiring certified arborists, including the fact that many municipal, utility, state and federal contracts require ISA certified arborists, a trend on the rise for good reason.

Make your job easier

The ISA Certification Board urges hiring managers to include certified arborists or certified tree workers in their bid language to ease their own peace of mind and to help increase the value of trees, according to Lisa W. Grant, Chairman, ISA Certification Board.

"Like public works directors, municipal arborists work with so many different sectors and professionals—engineers, community planners, contractors, politicians, city tree care volunteers and even the general public," said Grant. "Speaking from experience as an urban arborist, people don't always understand the vital management role we play in helping to shape community policy while also working to gain trust and support from citizens. Working with certified arborists helps take the worry off contracting work."

Grant adds that she's seen many cases of poorly pruned city trees. "Often this amounts to cities paying someone to actually devalue the tree, creating risks and hazards that weren't there in the first place," she said.



Many young trees are either pruned incorrectly or not pruned at all, both of which lead to structural defects and higher maintenance costs as the tree matures. (Photo courtesy of L. R. Costello)

Increase safety, save on costs

Alan Siewert, urban forester for the Ohio DNR Division of Forestry, and chair of ISA's International Certification Liaison Committee, commented on a situation where a city tried to save money, purchasing chainsaws and ladders for \$238.95, and ended up spending more than \$14,500 for a two-week hospital stay due to a lacerated kidney, broken arm and concussion when a tree worker fell out of a tree.

"To the service directors out there who argue that a chain saw is a cheap tool and effective tool, are you sure it's a cheap tool? Worker's compensation, hospital bills in the tens of thousands of dollars and a heap of paperwork when someone gets hurt is a regular nightmare," said Siewert, a Board-Certified Master Arborist and Municipal Specialist.

"We've seen it happen all too often," added Siewert. "Basic tree care equipment sure sounds cheap until you start thinking about it carefully. Unfortunately, there are a lot of hacks out there promoting themselves with a chainsaw and a bucket truck, and these

guys are not helping cities or providing benefit to the communities in the long run or the short run."

To maximize productivity and safety, arborists must balance science and practical skill. It is one thing to know how to make a proper cut—and a completely different thing to actually make one while in the top of a towering windy tree. Above all, ISA emphasizes safe work practices and tests and trains accordingly.



In order to pass the certified arborist or tree worker exam, individuals must know what to do in an emergency situation. All climbers should be trained and capable of carrying out an aerial rescue. (Photo courtesy of Mark Adams)

Do more for the city, benefit the community

The past ten years have brought more changes and innovations in the field of tree care than the previous 100 years. As local governments promote city growth and people move downtown, traditional models of tree care based in a forest setting need to evolve, as trees previously managed as part of a forest stand are now managed as individual trees. Professional arborists are often on top of research that will benefit communities.

For example, Robert Benjamin, Certified Arborist, Municipal Specialist and formerly with the City of Chicago as an urban forester for 33 years, is involved in a team proj-

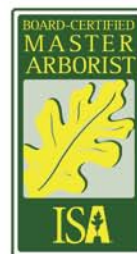
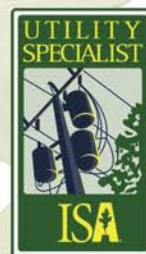
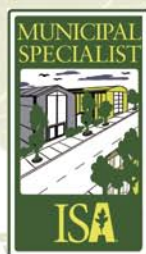
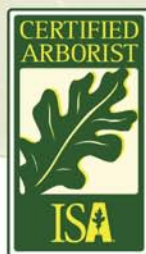


Make Your Job Easier

Require an ISA Certification Credential

Working with certified arborists can:

- Take the worry off contract work
- Increase safety, save on costs
- Benefit the city and community



Many municipal, utility, state and federal contracts now require ISA Certification

To learn more about this employer's tool visit

www.isa-arbor.com



The mark of a professional arborist.

ect with professionals across the green industry that is looking at alternate planting techniques for trees planted in urban areas. Keeping burlap and non-synthetic twine intact through the initial establishment period of up to one year may help a tree's success rate and will not require staking.



Merely identifying trees to save on a site plan is not sufficient. It is critical that tree professionals be an essential part of the development team on any project. Here, no effort was made to defend tree resources and tissues. (Photo courtesy of Kim Coder)

"Trees have enough problems surviving as it is, and a city is certainly not a normal place for it," Benjamin said. "The old timers in the field were called 'plants men' rather than 'nursery men' and were more concerned with growing than selling. Today, with basic research like this, arborists are trying to be generalists again, because they need to be."

Studies conducted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign studied green space alongside public housing in Chicago. These and many other ongoing similar studies across the country are finding that green spaces help create neighborhoods with fewer violent and property crimes, where neighbors tend to support and protect one another.

"The trees you plant on the streets you build are the one single thing that increases in value. A ten-inch tree is worth more than a four-inch tree, but a light pole that is 10 years old isn't adding anything new to the community," added Benjamin.

An employer's tool

All of the ISA certification programs—tree worker practices, tree climbing skills, applied sciences, management, specialized practices such as utility and municipal, and an advanced master arborist level—are a tool for employers. Certification affords the public and those in government the opportunity to make an informed selection of tree care services.

Launched last fall, the new Municipal Specialist certification is designed to assess management skills, essential for an arborist

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active in municipal work. Before an individual can even sit for the Municipal Specialist exam, candidates must be a Certified Arborist in good standing and have an additional three years of documented and verifiable work experience in an urban setting. This may include working as a city/municipal arborist or forester, tree warden, urban forester or specialist, park superintendent, municipal or urban forestry consultant, among others. The exam is designed to assess communication skills, public relations and education experience, administration, risk management, arboricultural practices, and policy and planning.



Certified arborists understand the need for proper training and experience in using new techniques and equipment. They are encouraged to follow tree care safety standards developed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

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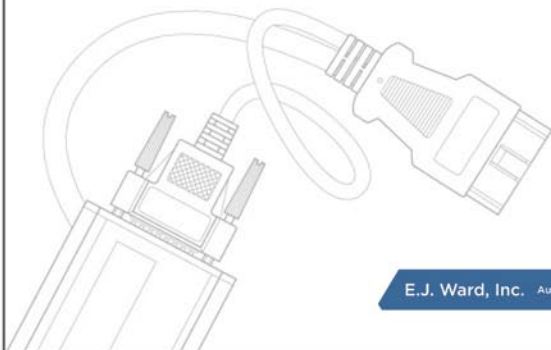


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While the bulk of ISA members are arborists, tree care companies and landscape contractors, the next highest industry segment ISA serves are utility companies and contractors, and municipal governments. At ISA's 81st Annual Conference and Trade Show, August 6-10, Nashville, TN, there are educational sessions that public works directors may be interested in attending. Leading tree care experts from ISA, the Utility Arborist Association (UAA) and foresters with power companies across the U.S. are offering information and releasing survey results on topics covering:

- How to make better municipal/utility partnerships
- Thriving in a compliance driven environment
- The role of UAA in education and training
- Better cooperation with federal agencies

It's no secret that public works directors have an incredible work load and wear many hats. By hiring and working with certified arborists and tree workers, public works directors can often improve their credibility, save costs, keep up with the trend of certified arborist contract language and prevent tree care headaches.

To find out more about ISA certification programs including available scholarships, contact **Lindsey Bowman** at lbowman@isa-arbor.com or www.isa-arbor.com. For more information on ISA's Annual Conference and Trade Show at Nashville's Gaylord Opryland Resort



& Convention Center, August 6-10, please go to www.isa-arbor.com/conference.aspx.

