If you receive a Notice from Durham County Council that requires you to fell a tree or undertake major tree surgery you should check with your District Council Planning Authority before carrying out any work. They will advise you whether or not the tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or whether you live in a Conservation Area, because the Planning Officer may wish to supervise the work.

For more information about hedges, trees and shrubs, contact the Highways Action Line (HAL)

Tel: 0191 370 6000
Email: hal@durham.gov.uk

Highways Information Leaflet No. 2
August 2006
Design and Print Services, Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham.
Hedges, trees and shrubs and all vegetation overhanging the roads and footways cause potential danger to users, in particular:

Visually impaired
Elderly people
People with disabilities
Pushchair users
People with children

We request your co-operation and ask that you keep your hedges, trees and shrubs trimmed to allow safe passage for users of the roads and footways.

Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980 states that where a hedge, tree or shrub overhangs a highway or any other road or footpath to which the public has access so as to endanger or obstruct the passage of vehicles or pedestrians, or obstructs or interferes with the view of drivers of vehicles or the light from a public street lamp or overhangs a highway so as to endanger or obstruct the passage of horse-riders then the highway authority can require the owner of the hedge, tree or shrub or the occupier of the land on which it is growing to lop or cut it or remove the cause of the danger, obstruction or interference within 14 days of the Notice being served.

If there is a failure to comply with the Notice, the County Council has power to remove the offending vegetation and recover the expenses reasonably incurred.

Trimming, pruning and lopping of hedges, trees and shrubs must be carried out in order to allow safe passage for all users of the highway.

Vegetation should not obstruct the passage of vehicles or pedestrians or the view of drivers of vehicles.

Trees and shrubs that overhang the footway should be cut back flush with the boundary of the public highway.

Trees and shrubs that overhang the footway should be trimmed to give a clear headroom.

Trees and shrubs that overhang the road should be trimmed to give a clear headroom of 5.2 metres (17ft.).

Trees and foliage should be kept trimmed so as not to interfere with the illumination of footways and carriageways from street lamps.

Trees and shrubs should be cut so as not to obstruct traffic signs.

Where trimming is to be undertaken in the vicinity of overhead electricity wires advice should be sought from the County Council as extreme care is required when working near live equipment.

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