

Choosing a tree care service

Take Time Choosing Between Tree Service Contractors.

The more tree service contractors and arborists you interview, the better your odds are of finding the best one for you in Sonoma County. Take the time to consider several local contractors and gauge their abilities and you'll be happier with the results.

Observe the process while the tree doctors or tree company technician is working, then review the results. After the job is completed, have the contractor accompany you while you review the results of the work. Inspect all the trees that were worked on and ensure that the terms of your contract were adequately met.

Step 1: Call the tree service, the tree surgeon, the arborist...

Explain what type of tree service work is involved. Do they exhibit a firm grasp of the details of the tree service you need? Some situations are much more urgent than others, and good tree service contractors and arborists will understand this. There are many potential hazards with this type of work. Asking questions before the fact will eliminate the potential for grief later. Below are some more suggested questions for your interview with tree doctors and tree service companies.

- How long have the certified arborists or tree contractors been in business?
- Do the tree care specialists specialize in the type of work you've described (i.e.: tree trimming, tree removal, tree care or tree relocation)?
- How long should it take the tree companies to complete the work?
- Do the tree services use spikes or lifts?
- What is the tree doctors' pricing policy?
- Will the tree companies provide a written estimate?
- Will the tree removal services or tree care companies provide a written contract?
- Are the tree contractors experienced trimming trees near live wiring?
- Are the tree care services and arborists covered by workers' compensation, liability insurance, property damage insurance, and public liability?
- Are the tree care companies' arborists ISA certified?
- How and when do the tree company technicians clean up?

Step 2: Make a decision on the best tree company for your needs

After you've interviewed several tree service experts, make a decision on who you want to hire. As with any contractor, you should ask for a written estimate from the tree service you work with. Call and ask any final questions and then ask for your tree company representative to provide a written and signed pricing, liability and timing agreement.

Lisa Bell, UCCE Sonoma. 11/2013. From The Prime Buyer's Report, Bay area edition, Feb 20, 2013:

<http://www.primebuyersreport.org/ca/santa-rosa-tree-service.html>