

Priority Storm Cleanup: Fallen Branches/Trees

After experiencing the cold of this past winter it is hard not to look forward to the warmth and rebirth the spring and summer bring. Along with this return to the favorable temperatures we cannot ignore the changes in the climate relating to a severity in spring and summer storms.

With this in mind I would like to refresh our residents' information on the City's response to storm damage. Due to manpower and equipment limitations the public works department has prioritized our response.

- Priority 1 is to clear any streets and driveways blocked by downed limbs or trees. These areas must be opened up for emergency vehicles and to allow an unimpeded traffic flow. Limbs that have fallen from city trees will be completely cleared. Trees or limbs fallen from private property will be cleared off of city street right of way to the property line.
- Priority 2 is to remove branches that have fallen from city trees onto parked vehicles or entrances to residences.
- Priority 3 is to remove city trees that have fallen onto residences and making the surrounding area safe.
- Priority 4 is eliminating limbs that have fallen from city trees from street right of way, tree lawns, and city parks.

The public works department does not cleanup limbs or trees that have fallen from private property except for the example in priority 1 stated above. Property owners must make arrangements for the removal and cleanup of tree debris from their residential trees with private companies.

In the event of a storm there are steps you can take to aid the city in its cleanup tasks. Be patient, in most cases after a large storm we are aware of the damage, and will take care of the issues in the order of the priorities listed. There may be a backlog of downed limbs due to the extent of damage throughout the city. After a week if you notice limbs are still down from a city street tree you should call the department and check on the progress of the cleanup. If you see limbs on power lines call Ameren UE. The public works department cannot work on tree with downed power lines and Ameren must be notified.

What can you do as a resident to protect your trees in the event of a storm? It is rare for a healthy tree to be damaged in a storm. Most urban trees fail due to issues such as sidewalk or driveway repairs or building construction. Remember a tree is a living breathing organism, be proactive provide regular maintenance and inspections of your trees with a reputable tree care provider , one that employs an ISA certified arborist.

I know that while you are raking leaves or picking up limbs it is easy to look at trees as a nuisance, but a tree is a real work horse in the fight against climate change. By removing carbon and mitigating storm water a tree is an unsung hero in modifying the effects of storms and maintaining the health of the planet. University City is proud to be a Tree City U.S.A. with that designation comes the understanding that we keep our trees and citizens safe before and after a storm event.