



Landscape Services

Safety Standard Operating Procedure

(Revised 7/2023)

Tree Holding

This SSOP provides guidance on the safe practice of **Tree Holding**. Large and/or small equipment may be used while trees are in holding. As with any equipment or tool, the most basic premise for safe operation is reading and adhering to the manufacturer's instructions and warnings. This SSOP is not a substitute for the owner's manual(s) produced by the manufacturer.

Safety Requirements PPE Required: General PPE is recommended, such as safe work clothes and gloves for handling small hand tools. When the tractor is needed, operator must wear eye protection and ground crew must wear hard hats and high-vis vests. See related SSOP for safe tractor use.

Safety Hazards: Vehicle and pedestrian traffic, lifting, bending, overhead objects, dust, noise, sharp objects, blind spots, equipment malfunction, pinch points, hot or cold temperatures, and inclement weather.

Scheduled: Year-round.

Horticultural Elements: Consider the natural history of each delivered tree and mimic those conditions as best as possible. Example: Keep containerized shade trees under the shade tarp.

IPM: Upon delivery the University Arborist, FMLS Assistant Manager, or a horticulturalist should inspect all trees for signs of defects, including pest issues. If structural defects or pest issues are identified, the tree should not be accepted and sent back to the vendor. Cultural, Biological, Chemical, and/or Mechanical methods of IPM should be used appropriately while trees are in holding. If Chemical methods are used, follow all label instructions. Consult the University Arborist, FMLS Assistant Manager, Oklahoma Plant Disease and Insect Diagnostic Lab, OSU Extension, horticulturalist, or other specialist with any questions or concerns.

When a tree order arrives at the greenhouse, staff should be available to meet the delivery. Small containerized trees may be moved by hand, but most of the trees will be large enough to require assistance with the tractor. A minimum of two staff are required to receive tree deliveries, one person to operate the tractor and one to work the ground. However, it's encouraged that several more people be present as it takes time to place and heal in trees. Additionally, as aforementioned, a qualified person should inspect the trees for defects and reject them if necessary, this person could be one of the two required. Some containerized trees could be stored seasonally in the greenhouse or under the shade cloth. Consult the University Arborist, FMLS Assistant Manager, or Greenhouse Manager for questions on where to properly hold individual trees.

When healing trees into the sand, shallow placement holes may be dug prior to unloading trees. When trees are placed in the sand holding area, all burlap should be covered with sand and/or woodchips to prevent desiccation and otherwise protect the root ball. If containerized trees are stored here, they should be stabilized to prevent them from falling over.

This can be accomplished by surrounding the container with sand or placing sandbags at the base of the tree. The University Arborist should update the GDrive tree inventory document regularly as deliveries are made. Likewise, the University Arborist, FMLS Assistant Manager, Greenhouse Manager, or other qualified staff should handle the cost receipt process in OKCorral.

While in holding, it is the responsibility of the greenhouse staff and University Arborist to ensure that tree needs are being met (such as water requirements, appropriate spacing, IPM needs, seasonal needs, etc.)

Ideally, trees should not be in holding long. Planting should occur as close to delivery as feasibly possible. The Greenhouse Manager or staff should be notified the week of scheduled planting to ensure the rootballs are watered and ready for transport. When trees are removed from holding and planted in the landscape, it's the responsibility of the University Arborist to record the greenhouse inventory change in the GDrive inventory document.



1) Tree holding sand area, highlighted in green.