Accredited companies may be immediately disqualified for failing to follow TCIA Accreditation guidelines, including:

- *Poor consumer complaint/dispute resolution record;*
- *Failure to issue written estimates or follow industry standards; and,*
- *Fraud or other irregularities.*

TCIA Accredited companies must provide consumers written estimates written to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A300 standards for tree care maintenance. The estimates will include technical work specifications that detail what work is to be done and terms and conditions.

When choosing a tree care company to work on your property, make an informed decision. Look for the TCIA Accredited Tree Care Company seal. Accredited companies adhere to the highest standards of quality.

About the Tree Care Industry Association

Established in 1938 as the National Arborist Association, TCIA is a non-profit trade association whose members are commercial tree care firms and affiliated companies. TCIA develops safety and education programs, standards of tree care practice, and management information for arboriculture firms around the world. We provide continuing education, training, conferences and publications to promote the safe and appropriate practice of tree care, including *Tree Care Industry* magazine, the most circulated and read publication in the industry, and TCI EXPO, the world's largest tree care trade show. For more information call 1-800-733-2622 or visit us at www.tcia.org.

TCIA™
VOICE OF TREE CARE
Tree Care Industry Association
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www.treecareindustry.org

Why Choose an Accredited Tree Care Company?

A Consumer Awareness Bulletin
from the Tree Care Industry Association

The Role of Tree Care Companies

It's hard to imagine a world without the cool comfort of shade trees in your back yard, without the gentle sound of wind blowing through the leaves on a summer day, without grand, healthy trees for your children and grandchildren to enjoy. Accredited tree care companies help you provide and maintain these essential elements.

Accredited tree care companies take expert care of your property, by caring for your trees and shrubs. This adds value and beauty to your home. They also help protect you and your family from bodily injury or property damage from trees that have defects such as cracked limbs and trunks, decayed limbs and trunks, and decayed or damaged root systems.

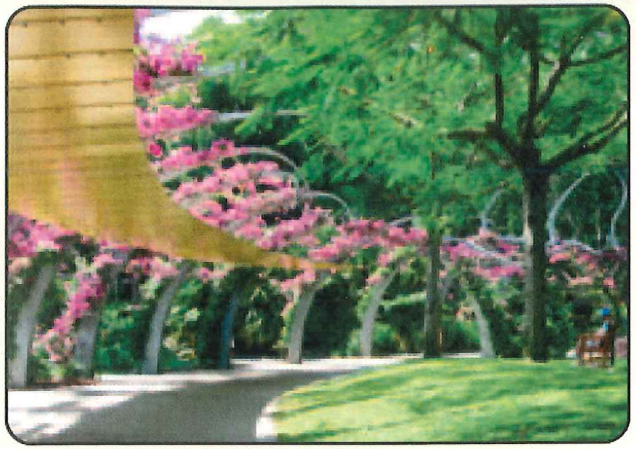
Accredited tree care companies employ staff trained in tree biology and the proper methods used to keep trees and shrubs healthy. They can identify diseases and pests that threaten the well being of trees and shrubs as well as the defects that could cause harm. Sometimes these defects are hidden inside the trunk, root system, or high in the crown. It takes a trained expert to recognize all the possible hazards.

What is TCIA Accreditation?

TCIA Accreditation is a consumer confidence program administered by the Tree Care Industry Association – America's oldest and most respected tree care trade association. The TCIA Accreditation program is built on the threefold foundation of ethics, quality, and consumer confidence.

Since 1938, the Tree Care Industry Association has been conducting educational programs and creating standards and best business practices to help tree care companies provide the highest levels of service to homeowners. The TCIA Accreditation program is a voluntary program that credentials companies which meet stringent criteria for professionalism, employee training, state and federal safety regulations, business ethics and customer satisfaction. Under the process, businesses undergo an extensive review and a comprehensive audit of professional and business practices aimed at safeguarding consumers.

Accreditation is the only business practices and compliance audit program for tree care companies in America.



Accreditation Audit Areas Include:

- Consumer Satisfaction
- Best Business Practices
- Business Ethics
- Employee Training
- Safety
- Quality
- Industry Standards
- Arborist Certification
- Insurance Coverage
- Work Estimates & Specifications

What's the difference Between Certification and Accreditation?

Arborist Certification is a process by which individual practitioners are tested to demonstrate a certain standard of tree care knowledge. Professional certification is a voluntary process that recognizes an individual who has met specific qualifications. It is important to remember that certification only sets a threshold of required knowledge, not the ceiling, and that professionals can practice tree care without being certified. Some states require *licensing* of arborists, which is not the same as certification and is not voluntary. TCIA Accreditation checks to see that businesses in these states hold the proper licenses.

TCIA Accreditation is also a voluntary process, but it evaluates entire businesses to ensure that professional practices and standards are met by all employees that work on your property. While certification attests to the fact that an individual practitioner has an acceptable level of skill or proficiency, only the process of accreditation looks at the overall manner in which a company conducts business.

What Consumer Safeguards are Built into TCIA Accreditation?

Companies accredited by TCIA are required to provide documented proof in many areas that protect consumers. Even tree care sales personnel must be trained to a level of technical proficiency equivalent to TCIA's *Tree Care Specialist* credential. This training includes tree biology, pruning standards, transplanting, tree disease and injury diagnosis, construction injury prevention, safety, soil science, and disease and pest control.

When you hire an Accredited tree care company, you can rest assured that TCIA has checked for proper insurance, applicable business and pesticide licenses, and customer service that is reliable and ethical. Accredited companies follow the BBB advertising codes, such as: "Whenever a price is mentioned in advertising, any extra charges should also be disclosed in immediate conjunction with the price;" and, "Advertisements which are untrue, misleading, deceptive, fraudulent, falsely disparaging of competitors, or insincere offers to sell, shall not be used." TCIA-accredited companies also follow the TCIA Code of Ethics (www.tcia.org).