

POLICY NAME:
Dutch Elm Disease Management Policy
POLICY AREA: Recreation, Parks & Culture

POLICY NO: RC26-01
APPROVAL DATE: Sep 14, 2026
LAST UPDATED:

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Tisdale recognizes elm trees as an important component of the community's urban forest and is committed to protecting and preserving these valuable trees.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a consistent municipal framework for the prevention, identification, inspection, pruning, removal, disposal and management of Dutch Elm Disease (DED) within the Town of Tisdale.

The Policy is intended to:

- a. protect and preserve healthy elm trees within the Town;
- b. reduce the risk of spreading Dutch Elm Disease;
- c. establish municipal procedures consistent with The Dutch Elm Disease Regulations, 2005;
- d. establish the responsibilities of the Town, property owners, residents, contractors and commercial tree pruners;
- e. establish procedures for the inspection and management of suspected and infected elm trees;
- f. establish procedures for the operation of the Town's designated elm tree disposal site; and
- g. provide a consistent approach to enforcement and cost recovery where authorized by law.

3. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply.

3.1 "Dutch Elm Disease"

The plant disease caused by the fungus *Ophiostoma ulmi*, including the fungus also known as *Ceratocystis ulmi* or *Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*.

3.2 "Elm Tree"

An elm tree means any living or dead tree or part of a tree of the *Ulmus* genus and its cultivars, including American, Siberian and Japanese elm trees.

For purposes of this Policy, elm tree also includes elm fuel wood, nursery stock, lumber, woodchips, logs, branches and bark.

This definition follows the provincial Regulations

3.3 "Elm Tree Disposal Site"

A waste disposal ground or other site approved or determined to be suitable for the disposal of elm trees by the province and municipality.

3.4 "Infected Elm Tree"

An elm tree that:

- a. has tested positive for Dutch Elm Disease at a designated or approved laboratory; or
- b. in the opinion of the Minister, officer or inspector, is infected, may be infected or is likely to be infected with Dutch Elm Disease.

3.5 "Prune"

To cut away living or dead branch material to enhance the growth, vigour or form of an elm tree, but does not include root pruning.

3.6 "Pruning Ban Period"

The period commencing April 1 and ending August 31 of each year.

3.7 "Remove"

To remove the trunk and all other parts of an elm tree above the stump.

3.8 "Stump"

All parts of the tree, including roots, exposed above ground level after the tree has otherwise been removed.

3.9 "Root Prune"

To cut the roots of a tree to minimize root grafts between trees.

4. PRUNING BAN

No person shall prune an elm tree during the pruning ban period of April 1 to August 31, except as permitted by the Regulations.

The prohibition does not apply where:

- a. the elm tree is damaged;
- b. the person has obtained the required authorization;
- c. the person is an employee of, or contracted by, a municipality or Crown corporation and considers pruning necessary in the course of their duties to ensure human safety or avoid damage to other property; or

5. DAMAGED ELM TREES

Where an elm tree is damaged during the pruning ban period, the owner, occupant or person controlling the property shall ensure that the damaged elm is pruned:

- a. within 14 days after the damage occurs; or
- b. within another period established by the Minister, officer or inspector.

Nothing in this Policy prevents the complete removal of an elm tree during the pruning ban period.

6. IDENTIFICATION AND MARKING

Where an elm tree:

- a. tests positive for Dutch Elm Disease; or
- b. is determined by the Minister, provincial officer or inspector to be infected, potentially infected or likely to be infected,

the tree shall be clearly marked in accordance with provincial requirements.

Where authorized, the Town's municipal inspector may identify and mark affected trees and may initiate the appropriate removal and disposal process.

7. INSPECTION

The Town may appoint or designate a municipal inspector in accordance with provincial requirements.

The municipal inspector may:

- a. receive and investigate complaints;
- b. inspect elm trees;
- c. identify suspected infected trees;
- d. arrange for testing;
- e. mark infected trees;
- f. issue or administer authorizations within the authority provided by the Regulations;
- g. communicate with property owners;
- h. coordinate removal and disposal; and
- i. coordinate with provincial inspectors and officials.

Nothing in this Policy limits the authority of provincial officers or inspectors.

8. TESTING

Where DED is suspected, the Town may arrange for testing through an appropriate laboratory. The Regulations identify designated laboratories for DED testing, including

the Saskatchewan Crop Protection Laboratory and certain Canadian government and university laboratories.

The Town may rely on an assessment by the province, an authorized inspector or an approved laboratory when determining the appropriate management response.

9. ORDER TO REMOVE

Where an elm tree is identified as infected, potentially infected or likely to be infected, the Town may, where authorized, require the property owner, occupant or person controlling the property to remove and dispose of the tree.

Where removal is required, the Town shall provide written direction identifying:

- the property;
- the tree;
- the reason for removal;
- the required work;
- the required disposal location;
- the required timeframe; and
- any applicable cost-recovery provisions.

Provincial legislation and orders shall be followed where the Province is exercising its authority.

10. TREE REMOVAL REQUIREMENTS

Every person removing an elm tree shall:

- a. remove the tree in accordance with the Regulations;
- b. comply with any applicable order or direction;
- c. remove the stump; or
- d. treat the stump in a manner satisfactory to the appropriate provincial authority.

11. DISPOSAL OF ELM TREES

Every person who prunes or removes an elm tree shall transport the elm tree to the designated elm tree disposal site for the municipality in which the tree is located.

Disposal shall occur during the next operating hours of the designated disposal site following pruning or removal.

No person shall:

- a. retain elm wood for future firewood;
- b. give away elm wood for firewood;
- c. sell elm firewood;

- d. store elm wood except where specifically authorized;
- e. dispose of elm wood at an unauthorized location; or
- f. transport elm wood for any unauthorized purpose.

12. MUNICIPAL TREE MANAGEMENT

For Town-owned elm trees, the Recreation and Parks Department shall:

- a. monitor tree condition;
- b. conduct appropriate pruning outside the pruning ban period;
- c. remove dead and dying material where appropriate;
- d. investigate reports of suspected DED;
- e. arrange testing where appropriate;
- f. arrange removal of infected trees;
- g. ensure proper stump management;
- h. ensure proper disposal; and
- i. maintain appropriate records.

13. PRIVATE PROPERTY

Property owners are responsible for complying with the provincial Regulations respecting elm trees located on their property.

Where a suspected or infected elm tree is identified, the Town may notify the property owner and provide information regarding:

- the disease;
- inspection;
- testing;
- removal;
- stump treatment;
- disposal;
- qualified contractors; and
- applicable provincial requirements.

14. COSTS AND COST RECOVERY

Unless otherwise authorized by Council, legislation, an agreement or an applicable bylaw, the property owner shall be responsible for the costs associated with the removal and disposal of an infected elm tree located on private property where the owner is required to undertake the work.

Where the Town undertakes work on private property because:

- the owner has failed to comply with a lawful direction;

- the work is necessary to address an immediate safety concern; or
- the Town is otherwise authorized to undertake the work,

The Town may transfer the costs to the property's tax roll if they remain unpaid after 90 days.

Costs may include:

- inspection;
- testing;
- tree removal;
- stump removal or treatment;
- transportation;
- landfill/disposal;
- contractor costs; and
- administrative costs where legally recoverable.

15. EMERGENCY WORK

Nothing in this Policy prevents the Town from taking reasonable emergency action to protect human safety or prevent damage to property.

Where emergency work involving elm trees is required during the pruning ban period, the work shall be limited to what is reasonably necessary to address the emergency.

All resulting elm material shall be disposed of at the designated municipal disposal site as soon as practicable.

16. REPORTING SUSPECTED DUTCH ELM DISEASE

Residents are encouraged to report suspected DED to the Town.

Reports should include:

- property address or location;
- approximate location of the tree;
- photographs where possible;
- description of symptoms;
- date symptoms were first noticed; and
- contact information for the person making the report.

The Town may inspect the property or refer the matter to the appropriate provincial authority.

17. ENFORCEMENT

The Town shall use education and voluntary compliance where appropriate.

Where a contravention is identified, the Town may:

- a. issue a written warning;
- b. issue a direction to comply where authorized;
- c. require removal and disposal where authorized;
- d. arrange for necessary work where legally authorized;
- e. recover costs where authorized; and
- f. refer the matter to the appropriate provincial officer or inspector.

18. REPLACEMENT TREES

Where a Town-owned elm is removed due to Dutch Elm Disease, the Town should consider replacing the tree with an appropriate non-elm species.

Tree replacement should consider:

- species diversity;
- climate suitability;
- mature size;
- proximity to utilities;
- sidewalks and roads;
- underground infrastructure;
- maintenance requirements; and
- long-term urban forest resilience.

The Town should avoid replacing large numbers of removed trees with a single species.

19. POLICY REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed at least every three years or sooner if:

- a. provincial legislation or regulations change;
- b. the Town experiences a significant increase in DED;
- c. the Province changes its DED management program;
- d. landfill disposal requirements change; or
- e. Council directs Administration to undertake a review.