

## **Parkfairfax Policy for Reducing Landscape and Infrastructure Damage Caused by Heavy Equipment**

Driving trucks, tractors, loaders and other heavy equipment onto curbs, sidewalks, landscaped areas, lawns and woodlands can cause damage to turf, trees, concrete, and utilities. It is the goal of Parkfairfax management working with staff, contractors and residents to reduce the amount of vehicular traffic over non-paved areas, and to mitigate damage if off-road equipment use is necessary.

Damage to tree roots is one of the most common, least visible and least repairable forms of vehicular damage. Simple turf damage is relatively easy and inexpensive to repair. Damage to plumbing of all types may be relatively uncommon but can be difficult to detect and expensive to repair. Damage to other utilities (electrical, gas, phone, cable) as a direct result of vehicle traffic seems to be uncommon. As general rule, if there is a focus on protecting trees, then plumbing and utilities are far less likely to be damaged as well.

Usually, damage to curbs and sidewalks is visible immediately. Requiring contractors to pay for such damage when they are responsible for it will provide them with an incentive to avoid it in the first place. Diligent follow-up on the part of Parkfairfax management is vital.

**Resident Contractors:** Contractors, including movers, hired by residents are subject to the same restrictions as Parkfairfax contractors. Residents are required to inform their contractors of the restrictions on off-road vehicle traffic. Residents or the drivers of their moving vans are not permitted to drive vehicles off-road while moving either into or out of Parkfairfax. It is the responsibility of the resident to repair any damage caused by the resident, a contractor of a resident, or the driver of the resident's moving van.

**Parkfairfax Staff:** All Parkfairfax employees will be made aware of the need to minimize off-road vehicle traffic. If an employee believes it is necessary to drive a vehicle off-road<sup>1</sup> he should get the approval of his supervisor (foreman level or above) and provide justification for doing so. Before using a vehicle off road, alternatives such as hand carrying or using wheelbarrows to move materials should be considered. If it is not practical to complete the work without using a vehicle then a route will be carefully chosen to avoid damage as much as possible. Plywood or wood planks will be made available to be used as a driving surface to reduce soil compaction and turf damage. Wood 2x4 planks or their equivalent shall be used when crossing curbs. They should be laid along the curb to transition the riding surface from the gutter to the lawn level. The transverse planks distribute the wheel loading over a longer distance to protect the curb from impact loading. Low walls shall not be crossed unless buried by several feet of soil. After construction is done, the soil shall be removed and the wall inspected for damage and settlement issues. Care should be taken to avoid crossing a wall near a drainage weep hole to prevent crushing the underdrain.

**Parkfairfax Contractors:** All Parkfairfax contracts will include a section in the specifications requiring the contractor to inform Parkfairfax and receive approval if they intend to use any vehicles off road. Contractors will provide Parkfairfax with a description of each vehicle, how it

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<sup>1</sup> The John Deere Gator is designed to be driven on landscaped areas and is exempt from this rule.

will be used, possible alternatives, and measures they intend to use to mitigate damage. Where construction occurs, the approval of a site sketch shall be required. The sketch shall indicate the location of existing trees, the location of protective construction fencing, the proposed access location at the site, and the storage location on the site.

Techniques to be used by contractors for mitigating damage should include those described above for Parkfairfax staff. They may also include some or all of the following:

**Erecting Barriers:** Set up protective construction fences around all of the trees in the work area. The fences should be placed as far out from the trunks of the trees as possible. As a general guideline, allow 1 foot of space from the trunk for each inch of trunk diameter. Where site conditions prevent this from occurring, the final location shall be shown on a site sketch and submitted for approval. The intent is not merely to protect the aboveground portions of the trees but also the root systems.

Instruct construction personnel to keep the fenced area clear of building materials, waste, and excess soil. No digging, trenching, or other soil disturbance should be allowed in the fenced area if at all possible.

Protective fences should be erected as far out from the trunks as possible in order to protect the root system.

**Limiting Access:** If at all possible, it is best to allow only one marked access route in and out of the work zone. All contractors must be instructed where they are permitted to drive and park their vehicles.

Specify storage areas for equipment, soil, and construction materials. These areas should be away from protected trees and well marked.

**Reporting:** Parkfairfax staff members who see unauthorized vehicles off paved areas will inform the violator that they must immediately move the vehicle to a paved area. They will also inform a supervisor (foreman level or higher) of the violation, who will take further action if necessary. The company name, phone number and vehicle license number will be recorded if possible.

If the driver of a vehicle refuses to remove the vehicle, Parkfairfax staff will call the Alexandria police non-emergency phone number (703-838-4444) to report the vehicle as trespassing. Vehicles that cross city sidewalks or curbs may also be in violation of city ordinances.

Residents may report violations to the Parkfairfax Main Office (703 998-6315) during regular business hours. At other times they may report violations to the Alexandria police non-emergency phone number (703 838-4444) or to the Parkfairfax answering service (703 551-6622) for emergency after hours service so that on-site staff may respond.