

RISK ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF FALLING TREES

THE PROBLEM

Which councils can say they appreciate the impact a falling tree would have? Although they understand the importance of knowing the health of its trees, how often they require maintenance, if they are obscuring essential highway signage etc, the impact, should one fall, is arguably more important. Councils would ideally understand the impact a falling tree would have, should it fall, in order to manage that risk.



THE APPROACH

The data on each tree asset, in each inspection area, is held in Tree SMART. The species, location and height of the tree is among the data stored, which is collected and uploaded during routine inspections. In order to maximise this data for risk assessment purposes, additional information was required to fully understand the potential impact, if a tree or part of a tree were to fall. Polygons in the inspection areas are interrogated to establish the location of assets, which could be affected, including, roads, footways, railways, or buildings. The calculations of tree size and height, along with the geographical data, was then brought together into the software, to establish what may be impacted. Having access to this knowledge, can inform any tree care decisions, by adopting a risk-based approach to tree maintenance.

THE RESULT

Councils can now use the extensive data stored in Tree SMART, to assess risk and manage their tree care programmes. Arborists and office-based staff can now view what a tree might strike, should it fall, at the simple press of a button. In addition, risk modelling and insight into the impact of a falling tree, is demonstration of the management of such highway assets and assists with evidence for DfT incentive funding.

