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RE: Tree Work is an Essential Service

Dear Western Chapter ISA Members:

During these uncertain times, many state and local governments are shifting to “essential” work only. Hazard tree removal, Utility Line Clearance Tree Trimming and maintaining our urban forests, particularly as related to the impact from invasive pests are essential components of maintaining our infrastructure. While the jurisdictions, business activities affected, and length of time for the closure may differ, most will exempt essential businesses or essential business activities that relate to the safety of the public.

The Western Chapter ISA represents over 5,000 professional arborists, urban foresters, and utility line clearance contractors from the public and private sectors. The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) and the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) along with Western Chapter ISA deems certain aspects of tree care to meet the definition of “essential business” given the fact that the performance of several highly skilled services directly protects the safety of the public and the safe operation of buildings and residences.

When making the determination of what aspects of tree care are “essential business activities” please review the following list as members from TCIA and ISA have shared:

- Hazard tree removal or removal of a dangerous tree
- Pruning of dead, dying or dangerous limbs
- Treatment for invasive insects which if left untreated would rapidly destroy a tree causing a hazard
- Utility line clearance
- Road safety clearance
- Cabling or bracing a hazardous tree
- Mitigating storm damage
- Emergency response readiness
- Treatment for ticks, and mosquitos or other public health treatments
- Removal of fire damaged or fuel trees in a fire hazard area
- Assessment of hazard trees or pest issues for the purposes of removal or treatment as described above

As stated in the letter from TCIA and ISA on COVID-19 “In times of emergency each company must make the decisions whether to continue with operations as normal. These are unusual times, and each jurisdiction may have drastically different rules and regulations regarding the operations of business. TCIA and ISA are committed to monitoring the updates of COVID-19 policies effecting our members. We will be closely monitoring the constantly evolving local, state, and federal policy regarding essential versus nonessential businesses in terms of business closures during lockdowns, and we will update members with any information that may impact their businesses.”

We will continue to be here to support each of you in these troubling times. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions on this developing situation. Feel free to forward this email to your Representative and Senator so they can understand the importance of our industry and profession.

Thanks for your patience as we maneuver this new landscape – these are extraordinary times. We will continue to monitor the details and report out as needed.

Molly Sinnott
2019-20 President