

SUMMER BRANCH DROP

Guidance for Customers

Key message: Summer branch drop is rare and difficult to predict. It describes the unexpected failure of a large limb from an apparently healthy mature tree, often in warm, calm summer weather. You should follow this guidance to minimize the chance of it affecting you.

The following tree species, tree characteristics and weather conditions increase the risk of summer branch drop occurring. Reports commonly involve mature broadleaved trees, particularly:



Oak



Beech



Ash



Horse Chestnut

Individual trees more at risk	Conditions increasing risk
o Large, mature or over-mature tree.	o A prolonged hot or dry period.
o Long, heavy, near-horizontal limb, especially if extends beyond the crown.	o Hot, still or calm summer conditions.
o Visible defects: cracks, cavities, decay, deadwood, fungi or opening at a fork.	o Heavy rain following dry weather, adding weight to foliage and shoots.

Before pitching a tent or setting up an activity

- 1** LOOK UP Check the trees and branches above the whole area.
- 2** MOVE CLEAR Avoid large overhanging branches, especially long or near-horizontal limbs.
- 2** CHECK FOR CHANGE Look and listen for cracks, hanging branches, dead limbs or freshly fallen wood.
- 3** THINK ABOUT USE Keep tents, hammocks, seating and cooking areas away from anything that concerns you.
- 4** REPORT IT Tell centre staff straight away. Do not touch, try to pull a branch down.



If you see a tree that concerns you

Stop use immediately. Move people, tents, vehicles and activities away from beneath the limb and the wider area it could reach.

Tell the centre so they can barrier the tree off and contact a competent person.