ANSI A300 Standard Practices

Putting A300 Standards to Good Use

Gordon Mann, Consulting Arborist
Purpose

- Familiarize our members and constituents with ANSI A300

- Promote and support the incorporation of the standards into community use – ordinances, policies, practices, permit conditions, and management plans.
Outline

- Trees are Infrastructure
- What is a Standard
- What is ANSI and A300
- Examples to use A300
- Conclusion
What is a standard?

- “something established by authority, custom, or general consent as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value, or quality”
- “a model or example to be followed: a definite level or degree of quality that is proper and adequate for a specific purpose” - 2000 Merriam-Webster ©
What is a standard? (cont.)

- a set of characteristics or qualities that describes features of a product, process or service
- “Something, such as a practice or a product that is widely recognized or employed, especially because of its excellence.” The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language
Why Standards?

- Promote most proven tree care practices
- Embody professionalism
- Enhance communication between clients, field personnel and office staff, and the public
- Reduce miscommunication between all of the above
- Educate the public
- Facilitate contractual fulfillment
- Reduce liability exposure
American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

- A federation of organizations, associations/societies, governmental agencies, international bodies, etc.
- Oversees the development, creation, promulgation and use of thousands of standards that directly impact industries in nearly every sector.
WHAT IS ANSI (cont.)

- ANSI does not develop standards; they accredit committees with expertise in a particular subject area to develop standards relating to that industry.
- ANSI A300 standards are developed by a committee, the ASC A300.
- The ASC A300 was approved June 28, 1991.
- To maintain accreditation, the committee must comply with ANSI procedures.
Accredited Standards Committees

- are used in many industries when a standard affects a broad range of interests; or
- where multiple associations or societies with similar interests exist
- are administered by a secretariat (TCIA) to ensure compliance with ANSI operating procedures
Development of ANSI Standards involves:

- Industry professionals (public and private sectors)
- Transparency, due process, cooperation, compromise and consensus among stakeholders.
ASC A300 Committee:

- ALCA
- ANLA
- ASCA
- ASLA
- Asplundh
- Bartlett
- Davey
- ISA
- NPS
- PGMS
- PLCA
- SMA
- USFS
- TCIA
- UAA
The A300 Committee
Consensus: all, or the vast majority, of the committee come to an agreement on every line in the standard.
The Tree Care Industry developed:
ANSI A300 Tree Care Operations: Standard Practices for Tree, Shrub and Other Woody Plant Maintenance
Currently, there are 7 parts
ANSI Standards – Current and under development

- Part 1 - Pruning (2008)
- Part 5 - Tree Protection (Construction) (2005)
Part 6 – Transplanting (2005)
Part 7 - Integrated Vegetation Mgmt. (2006)
Part 8 - Soil Management*
Part 9 - Risk Management*
Part 10 - Pest Management**

* In draft stage
** In discussion stage
ANSI A300 Documents:

- The current standard for developing written specifications for tree care practices.
- Consists of standardized language, definitions, methods, practices (requirements, recommendations and limitations) to develop job specifications.
- Protects the consumer,
- Aligns the industry’s services,
- Standardizes tree care operations, and
- Provides a level playing field.
Takes precedence over all previously existing tree care industry standards.

Are still voluntary—not rules or regulations.

Some governmental agencies reference them in local or regional ordinances or have enacted them as law.

The federal government encourages adoption of ANSI standards in its agencies.
Serves as standard for federal, state, municipal and private entities, including arborists, property owners, property managers, and utilities in the development of their management specifications.

Applies to any person or entity engaged in the management of trees, shrubs, or other woody plants (whether they know it or not).
Another Familiar ANSI Standard

Z133.1
- Safety Requirements for Arboricultural operations
- Purpose is to provide safety criteria for arborists, other workers and the public
- Used by OSHA at federal and state level
The A300 standards apply exclusively to the management of "woody landscape plants."

"The [A300] standard does not apply to agriculture, horticultural production, or silviculture, except where explicitly noted otherwise." (p.ii, Forward)

The goals of pruning for these divisions of arboriculture/forestry (for production of wood, food, or forest products) might well require very different pruning methods and the removal of more live foliage or wood than would be advisable when pruning woody landscape plants such as our urban forest trees.
How Can We Use A300?

- "A300 Pruning standards are performance standards and shall **not** be used as job specifications." (p.11, Annex B)

- "These standards [the A300] are used to develop written specifications for work assignments. They are **not** intended to be used as specifications in and of themselves. (p.ii, Forward)

- Then how can it be enforced?
ANSI A300 Standards consist of a number of “shall” and “should” statements:

- **Shall**: is "a mandatory requirement." A mandatory requirement is not optional and must be followed for ANSI A300 compliance.
Should vs. Should

- **Should**: is an advisory recommendation which may be deviated from when defensible reasons or valid justifications for non-compliance exist.
Writing Specifications or Laws

- The word "should" is used in some areas of the A300 standards, but is **not** used in specifications or laws.

- The word "shall" is used in specifications and laws.
Specifications and Laws could include two approaches to incorporate A300:
1) that "all work shall be completed in accordance with ANSI A300 standards;"

2) all ANSI A300 "advisory recommendations" must be either adhered to or defensible/valid reasons be given for non-compliance.

When no "shoulds" remain, the A300 becomes enforceable.
Other Examples of Language for Including ANSI A300 Pruning Standards into our Communities:

- Work shall be performed in accordance with the current version of the ANSI A300 standards and to the following specifications: (list of specific parts or clear descriptions follows)
Examples of Language (cont.)

The City recognizes the most current version of the ANSI A300 Pruning Standards as the performance standard for pruning all trees regulated by ordinance with the following exceptions:

- Espalier and pollarding are not acceptable pruning practices.
- Specifications for pruning shall be verbal or written, developed and administered by an arborist [or qualified person] for all work performed.
Examples of Language (cont.)

Work shall be performed in accordance with A300 standards following specifications which accomplish the objective(s) for pruning the particular tree(s):
Objectives State the Why

Why is the work is being performed - it must be specific enough to guide the performance of work.

- I can’t say: The objective is “to prune” or “to maintain” the tree. This doesn’t create a clear enough goal or outcome for how the work will be performed.

- I can say: The objective is: to reduce risk while leaving as large a tree as possible; or provide clearance in the right-of-way of 13 feet over the street and 8 feet over the sidewalk; or reduce the presence of disease and parasites; or combinations of the above; or other valid objectives.
Objectives for pruning:

- Reduce risk from falling branches
- Reduce risk from major structural defects
- Reduce disease and pests
- Reduce density of live branches
- Provide clearance
- Increase light levels below & reduce wind resistance
- Restore damaged trees
- Reduce height and or spread
- Improve aesthetics
- Your reason for making a cut to a tree branch ...
Specifications:

- Should be written and shall state objective(s).
- Identify the tree(s) on which work is to be done.
- Specify the method(s) of pruning to be used to meet objective(s).
- Define: Extent of pruning, Location of pruning in the tree or parts to be pruned.
Other information to include:

- Size range of parts to be removed
- Percentage of foliage to be removed.
- Portion of crown where pruning will be done.
- Maximum size of pruning cuts.
- Vertical clearance height(s).
- Branch aspect ratios of reduction cuts.
- Follow-up pruning
The list is specific for a tree or group of trees

- The objectives state why we are working on the tree
- They speak to the benefits to the tree from the work
- The descriptions are specific and provide measurable terms
A300 and Regulations

The key to the current ANSI A300 Pruning is the requirement for pruning objectives and specifications. Specific Language:

2.3.2 Pruning specifications shall be adhered to.

6.1 Pruning Objectives shall be established prior to beginning any pruning operation.

7.1 One of more of the following methods shall be specified to achieve the objective.
**Pruning methods:** One or more of the following methods shall be specified to achieve the objective(s).

**Clean:** pruning to remove one or more of the following non-beneficial parts: dead, diseased and/or broken branches.

**Thin:** selective pruning to reduce density of live branches.

**Reduce:** pruning to decrease height and/or spread (branch or crown).

**Raise:** pruning to provide vertical clearance.
Enforcement

If someone prunes a tree without an objective, or if the objective and methods don’t align, how can they be complying with the standards?

If they don’t have a written objective or specification, they can be interviewed. Write down their statement, and have them sign it as part of the investigation.
Long Term Thinking

Which is a better strategy for long term success?

A) Set the rules to chase and bust the (hopefully the minority) poor practicing businesses.

B) Educate the public and responsible businesses in proper work. Set a high bar.

C) Wish everyone would do everything in the proper manner.

D) Set the fines high enough to fund your tree planting program.
A300 in Use

- **Tree Preservation Ordinance** – permit required to prune or remove trees; pruning performed to specifications written in accordance with ANSI A300

- **Street Tree Ordinance** – permit required to plant, prune, treat, or remove trees; pruning performed to specifications written in accordance with ANSI A300

- **Bid Specifications** – Pruning work shall be performed in accordance with the current version of the ANSI A300 standards and to the following specifications: (list follows)

- **Construction Plans and Tree Preservation Plans** – care and pruning; pruning performed to specifications written in accordance with ANSI A300

- **Permit Conditions** - pruning performed to specifications written in accordance with ANSI A300
A300 in Use (cont.)

Verified Tree Care Company List *required information – voluntary participation*:

- Current full-time Certified Arborist or Board Certified Master Arborist on staff, (Certified Tree workers will be noted as a bonus listing)
- Current City Business License
- Current State Contractors License (required for any job greater than $500), CA Law, not enforced by City
- Evidence of liability and workers compensation insurance. Certificates of insurance naming the City as additional insured will be needed to perform permitted work on City-owned trees.
- Sign Agreement to educate their City customers about the City’s tree permit processes.
- Sign Agreement to follow City’s codes for tree permit processes and tree replacement.
- Sign Agreement to perform pruning work to specifications written in accordance with ANSI A-300 Pruning Standards
Summary

- It is up to the municipal arborists to set the bar for tree care in their community.
- ANSI A-300 provides a standard on par with Engineering Standards and Uniform Building Codes
- Work with your City Attorney and Code Enforcement to find the correct language for your jurisdiction
Conclusion

- ANSI A300 provides the municipal arborist with a clear set of industry standards
- We can grow the inclusion of the standards like we included the use of “Certified Arborist”
- The language can be effectively worded for your community ordinances, permit conditions, specifications, and tree preservation plans
- Set the bar high for your community