Mrs Antrobus

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Borchestershire
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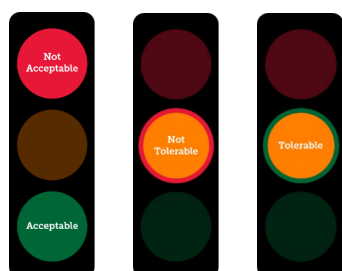
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Tree Risk-Benefit Management Strategy

VALID

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v9.0

Trees give us many benefits that we n
We're going to the manage the risk from our trees and branches fa
to an Acceptable or Tolerable le

Nightgale Farm

1   Establishing the context

Trees give us many benefits we need

1   The more obvious benefits that trees give us are visual beauty in the landscape, wood, and the various crops they produce. Wildlife habitat, pollution filtering, and reducing weather and climate change effects are additional values. Trees also have important social value as part of our culture, history, or because they commemorate an important event. As if all these benefits aren't enough. There's an ever-expanding body of scientific evidence that shows trees are essential for our physical health, mental wellbeing, and quality of life.

The overall risk to us from trees and branches falling is extremely low

2   Compared to other everyday risks we readily accept, the overall risk to us from branches or trees falling is extremely low. Our annual risk of being killed or seriously injured is less than one in a million. That's so low, we're at greater risk driving on about a 400km/250mi round trip to visit friends for a weekend than from branches or trees falling over an entire year. Given the number of trees we live with, and how many millions of us pass them daily, being killed or injured by a tree is a rare event. A rare event that usually happens during severe weather.

We can't be an insurer of nature or eliminate the risk from trees

3   Of course, we can't be an insurer of nature. Trees are living structures that sometimes shed branches or fall during severe weather. Since we need the many benefits from trees, we have to accept we can't remove all of the risk. Leaves, bark, cones, nuts, fruits, and small diameter deadwood regularly fall from trees. This natural debris is an Acceptable or Tolerable risk.

1.1   Duty of care

Reasonable Proportionate Reasonably practicable

4   We have a duty of care to manage the risk from our trees. The duty also says we should be reasonable, proportionate, and reasonably practicable when managing the risk. That means there's a balance we need to strike between the many benefits trees provide, the risk, and the costs of managing the risk. By taking a balanced approach, we don't waste resources by reducing risk - and losing benefits - when the risk is already Acceptable or Tolerable.

We all have a responsibility to make reasonable decisions

5   We're all expected to act reasonably and responsibly. We can manage our exposure to the higher risk from tree failure that happens during severe weather by not going outside. If we go out during severe weather, we're choosing to accept some of the risk.

1.2   Risk tolerance

What's an Acceptable or Tolerable level of risk from our trees?

6   The Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) is an internationally recognised approach to making risk management decisions. It's used by duty holders where they manage a risk that's imposed on the public. ToR defines Broadly Acceptable and Unacceptable levels of risk. Between these levels is a region where the risk is Tolerable if it's 'as low as reasonably practicable' (ALARP). Put simply, ALARP means the risk is Tolerable if the costs of the risk reduction are much greater than the value of the risk reduction.

1.3   Risk objectives & Risk ratings

Risk ratings are as easy to understand as traffic lights

7   VALID has applied 'ISO 31000 - Risk Management' and the 'Tolerability of Risk Framework' (ToR) to tree risk-benefit management and assessment, which we've adopted. In ISO risk terms, our 'objectives' are to grow, maintain, and conserve trees because of the many benefits they give us we need. And, to manage the risk from tree failure to an Acceptable or Tolerable level. We're going to manage the risk from our trees with **Passive Assessment**. We have four easy-to-understand traffic light coloured risk ratings to show how we'll manage the risk.

Red   **Not Acceptable** risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level

Amber   **Not Tolerable** risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level, but with a lower priority than red Not Acceptable risks

Amber   **Tolerable** risks will not be reduced, but may require an increased frequency of assessment than green Acceptable risks

Green   **Acceptable** risks will not be reduced

Nightingale Farm

Keeping an eye out for obvious tree risk featu...
you can't help but notic...
Passive Assessme...

2   When might a tree be dangerous?

Trees with the highest risk are the easiest to spot

Be watchful after storms

8   When a tree has a risk that might not be Acceptable or Tolerable, it'll usually have an obvious tree risk feature you can't help but notice. Passive Assessment is simply picking up on these features as you go about your day-to-day routine. If you see anything like these features, get in touch with us.

2.1   Root failure

Storms can break tree roots without blowing them over

Signs to look out for are

Change in angle of the trunk
Large cracks in the soil
Hump in the ground on one side

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2.2   Hanging branches

Don't forget to look up

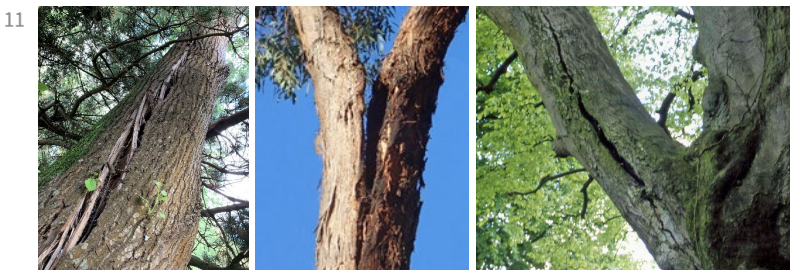**Branches can break during storms and still hang on**

Sometimes they can get stuck up there for quite a while

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2.3   A crack or split into the wood, beyond the bark

When trees bend and twist in storms the wood can split and crack

Vertical cracks in the bark are just the tree growing well there's no need to worry

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2.4   Decline & death

To stay healthy and strong trees need 'solar panel' leaves to make food

When trees suffer they often have much less leaf cover and many dead branches

Standing dead trees have great habitat benefits but need checking

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2.5   Decay fungi fruiting bodies

To decay fungi these 'fruits' are like apples to an apple tree

Decay fungi and trees mostly live happily together creating essential habitat for wildlife

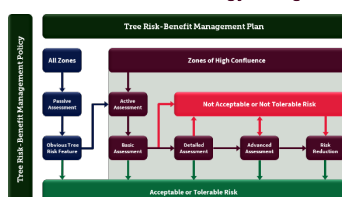**Fungi can sometimes 'eat' too much wood and weaken the tree**

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2 Obvious Tree Risk Features | Tree Risk-Benefit Management Strategy

v9.0

3   Simpler • Clearer • Smarter

The Strategy at a glance

14 Whether you manage or assess tree risk, we're here to help make your life less complicated and more effective.

15 From Strategy to App, we've got all your bases covered with the first complete tree risk-benefit management system. By taking out bafflegab (vague and ambiguous words) and numberwang (questionable maths that you can easily get wrong) from tree risk, we've made it...

16 "*Uncomplicated...intuitive...simpler...clearer...smarter*"

17 This is what Duty Holders, Arborists, and other team members who we've trained as Basic Validators are all saying. They're some words you'll likely use to describe how you feel after you've validated your approach to tree risk.

3.1 Tree risk-benefit management

**Reasonable
Proportionate
Reasonably practicable**

18 Whether you're a Government Agency, Landowner, or Homeowner you have a duty of care to manage the risk from your trees falling or dropping branches. To fulfil your duty, you should be reasonable, proportionate, and reasonably practicable about managing the risk to an Acceptable or Tolerable level.

19 VALID's got your back here with our full range of ISO 31000 compliant and common sense **Tree Risk-Benefit Management Strategies**. As part of our not-for-profit goals, we've released all the strategies under a creative commons license. That means they're *free* and open to *everyone*. **Validators** can help you customise your strategy. Or, they have an abbreviated *Validator Strategy* that covers you and them.

3.2 Tree risk-benefit assessment

**VALID has been stress-tested
to breaking point**

20 Risk-benefit assessments are carried out under the protective umbrella of our Tree Risk-Benefit Management Strategy. The Strategy does more than 95% of your assessments for you. When you need to carry out a *Detailed Assessment,* you'll use our super smart and intuitive **Tree Risk App**.

21 We've built the engine of the App with a Professor of Natural Hazards & Risk Science. The Professor's an internationally distinguished expert in this field. He's test-driven the model to breaking point:

> *"We have stress-tested VALID and didn't find any gross, critical sensitivities. In short, the mathematical basis of your approach is sufficiently robust and dependable for any practical purpose."*

> Willy Aspinall
> Cabot Professor in Natural Hazards & Risk Science
> University of Bristol

3.3 Tree risk ratings

**Risk ratings are as easy to
understand as traffic lights**

22 Yes, it really is that clear and easy to understand. There's no confusion about what vague and ambiguous words or complicated numbers mean. We have four easy-to-understand traffic light coloured risk ratings.

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Amber   Not Tolerable risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level, but with a lower priority than red Not Acceptable risks

Amber   Tolerable risks will not be reduced but may require an increased frequency of assessment than green Acceptable risks

Green   Acceptable risks will not be reduced

3.4 Tree risk-benefit management advice & training

**Visit our Training page
Or get in touch for help**

23 We work with Duty Holders to help them manage the risk and benefits from their trees. We also train Arborists to become **Validators**. And personnel who spend a lot of tim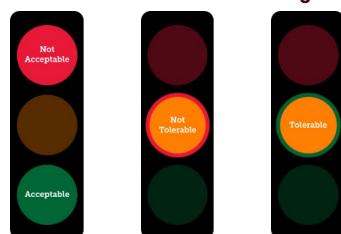e outside, who aren't Arborists, to be **Basic Validators**.