



Storm Wise Communities

Every year Georgia communities face storm events and natural disasters, including droughts, floods, ice storms, tornadoes, and hurricanes. Uninformed decisions about damaged or fallen tree removal, clean up and repair, and disposal of the thousands of tons of biomass created can have devastating impacts on people, property and community budgets. The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) offers technical assistance to communities, mitigating property damage and human risk. When local officials and citizens utilize GFC resources to become *Storm Wise*, they are prepared in advance for disaster events and effective recovery responses.



Before and after storms, foresters provide tree reconnaissance in neighborhoods. They connect homeowners with certified arborists for tree removal, educate community associations about tree inventories and maintenance planning, and support local tree planting events.

Information furnished by the GFC can also help safeguard homeowners and neighborhood groups from 'do-it-yourself' pruning and cutting actions that can be dangerous to people and the urban forest. The GFC recommends that property owners always hire certified arborists who carry personal property, liability and workman's compensation insurance, and are knowledgeable about tree growth and maintenance.

Following storms, the Georgia Forestry Commission provides several resources to communities. The GFC strike team crews aid in road clearing, damage control, risk management and assist in reestablishing infrastructure.

Along with these teams, the GFC has trained professionals that can assist communities in assessing public trees and pinpointing those that are a safety risk, identifying methods to reduce residents' vulnerability to falling trees and enhance residents' feelings of safety in the urban forest. For more information on *Storm Wise* services, please visit GaTrees.org.