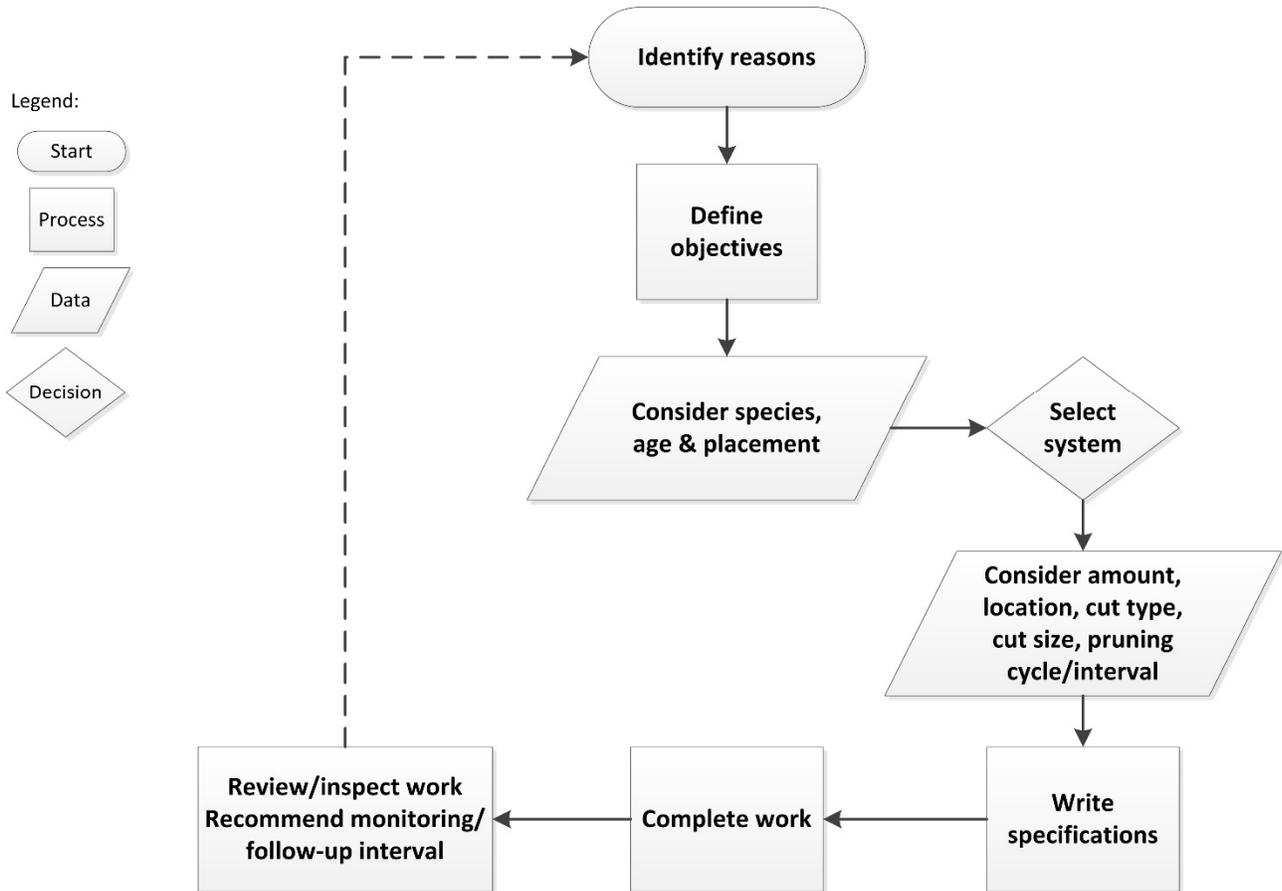


# A300 Specification writing guideline

## Pruning Process Flowchart



Clearly written specifications ensure that pruning objectives are communicated and understood. Pruning specifications must address individual plant, site, and client requirements. Multiple objectives, or combinations of objectives, may be specified when pruning individual plants or groups of plants. Once pruning objectives are established for a plant, a pruning system may be specified.

The examples below provide guidance in specifying pruning objectives. While these examples cover many scenarios, they do not necessarily include all possible objectives, systems, combinations, or pruning solutions.

## **A. Specification writing template (see C. Specification template form)**

1. Note the physical location of the plant(s) to be pruned.
2. List and describe objective(s) of the work.
3. Identify a pruning system if necessary (as most pruning in commercial tree care uses a natural system, it is not necessary to list "natural system" in every specification).
4. Describe the extent of pruning work to be done. This is where you address conditions of concern for the work, such as: Type of parts to be removed (e.g. living or dead branches, fruit, mistletoe); Pruning amount (e.g. percent of foliage or crown, or number of branches to be removed); Location in crown of parts to be removed; Pruning cut types (e.g. removal, reduction, heading, shearing); and/or, Size range (e.g. diameter, length) of parts to be removed.
5. Specify additional information. This is where you address additional items such as: Plan for disposal/repurposing of debris; Time frame for completion; and, Other information as necessary (e.g. topiary shape, clearance distances, desired views, lines of sight).

## **B. Specification writing guidance based on various objectives**

### **B-1 Mitigate risk**

**Physical Location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Mitigate risk: Prune to lower the likelihood of tree, branch, and/or other tree part failure and impact to targets (see ANSI A300 Part 9, *Tree Risk Assessment*).

#### **Specification**

Reduce or remove branches (living and dead) and/or other parts that pose unacceptable risk of failure (specify condition of concern, amount to be pruned, and types, sizes and locations of pruning cuts).

Reduce length of branches or leaders to reduce load (specify condition of concern and amount to be removed).

#### **Additional information**

In addition to pruning, consider supplemental support if appropriate (see ANSI A300 Part 3, *Supplemental Support Systems*).

Specify monitoring interval.

## **B-2 Manage health**

**Physical Location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Manage health: Prune to improve or maintain plant health, or control pests (see ANSI A300 Part 2, *Soil Management* and A300 Part 10, *IPM*).

**Specification**

Remove deleterious parts, e.g. dead or dying branches, diseased or infested branches, rubbing, weakened or broken branches, parasitic plants, etc. (specify condition of concern, types, sizes and locations of cuts).

**Additional information**

Take appropriate precautions when necessary to prevent the spread of pests, e.g. seasonal timing of work, sterilization of tools, handling/disposal of debris/by-products.

Specify monitoring interval.

## **B-3 Develop or improve structure**

**Physical location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Develop/improve structure: Prune to improve plant architecture (i.e. desirable branch size, spacing, diameter and aspect ratios), ensure that the plant is compatible with the site (e.g. minimize conflict with traffic, sightlines or infrastructure), and/or to restore damaged plants. Initiation of structural pruning early in the life of the plant can enhance benefits and value, and reduce long-term maintenance costs and potential for failure.

**Specification**

Select dominant leader(s) and desirable scaffold branches for development as appropriate for the species and site (specify leaders and scaffold branches to be retained and developed).

Subordinate or remove competing leaders, branches and shoots (specify competing leaders and branches to be subordinated or removed). If necessary, subordinate larger branches over multiple growing seasons to avoid making cuts with large aspect ratios.

Avoid removing an excessive amount of living material at any one time.

**Additional information**

Specify an appropriate maintenance interval.

#### **B-4 Restoration pruning**

**Physical location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Restoration: Prune to redevelop or improve structure, form, and appearance following damage from storms, vandalism, lion tailing, topping or other substandard pruning, or other causes.

#### **Specification**

Assess trees for risk if necessary prior to beginning restoration pruning (see ANSI A300 Part 9, *Tree Risk Assessment*).

Retain suitable leaders, branches and shoots to be developed (specify parts to retain and develop).

Reduce, subordinate and/or remove competing or undesirable parts (specify parts to be removed, and types, sizes number and locations of cuts).

#### **Additional information**

Follow process outlined in Pruning to Develop or Improve Structure, above.

#### **B-5 Provide clearance**

**Physical location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Provide clearance: Prune to prevent interference with infrastructure, buildings, traffic, lines-of-sight, desired views, or other plants; also to ensure safe and reliable utility services, raise crowns, provide access to sites, and comply with regulatory and other requirements as necessary (list reason for clearance).

#### **Specification**

Specify clearance amount according to intended site use, planned maintenance interval, and characteristic form of the plant, including shape, growth rate and likely growth response following pruning (specify clearance distance, and/or branches and leaders to be removed, and/or types, sizes and locations of cuts).

Use directional pruning to encourage growth away from the specified clearance area and to develop compatible and stable structure (specify location of branches to be retained).

#### **Additional information**

Avoid removing an excessive amount of living material at any one time.

Specify an appropriate maintenance interval.

## **B-6 Manage size and/or shape**

**Physical location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Manage size/shape: Prune to reduce size or maintain desired shape (consider species and typical form, ability to tolerate the amount of pruning required, location, current condition, and other characteristics such as cultivar, failure profile, growth rate and expected growth response following pruning).

**Specification**

Selectively reduce or remove branches, leaders or other parts to achieve or maintain a desired form, shape or size, or to encourage regenerative growth from lower parts of the crown (specify parts to be reduced or removed and/or types, sizes number and locations of cuts).

**Additional information**

Avoid removing an excessive amount of living material at any one time.

Specify an appropriate maintenance interval.

## **B-7 Retrenchment (Regenerative) pruning**

**Physical location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Retrenchment/Regeneration: Perform retrenchment pruning to preserve and maintain trees in the landscape, especially those of high value or special heritage.

**System** (list and describe)

Natural pruning system. Retrenchment is a natural process whereby older trees gradually shed overextended, decayed, damaged, or declining branches and leaders, and redirect energy into epicormic growth from interior and lower portions of the crown. Depending on species and site conditions, this process may occur over many years, decades or centuries.

Retrenchment pruning mimics the natural process of retrenchment by making prescriptive pruning cuts to remove declining branches, reduce risk of failure, stimulate new shoots on interior and lower branches, and restore tree vitality and appearance. Resulting new growth is subsequently managed to guide future structural development. Arborists should consider whether retrenchment pruning is appropriate, considering factors such as species, condition, placement, aesthetics, and expected response.

**Specification**

Selectively reduce, remove or head branches that are dead, senescing, damaged, or that pose unacceptable risk (specify condition of concern, types, sizes and locations of cuts).

Minimize the size of cuts on living wood whenever possible (preferably less than 6" in diameter).

Maintain and monitor suitable branches or leaders that are healthy and do not pose unacceptable risk (*specify branches and leaders to be retained, and monitoring interval*).

**Additional information**

After retrenchment pruning, follow process outlined in Restoration (B-2.3), and Develop and Improve Structure, (B-4).

**B-8 Improve aesthetics**

**Physical location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Improve aesthetics: Prune to improve the visual appearance of plants and/or the surrounding site.

**Specification**

Selectively reduce or remove branches, leaders or other parts to achieve aesthetic objectives (specify parts to be removed and/or types, number, sizes and locations of cuts).

**Additional information**

Specify an appropriate maintenance interval.

**B-9 Manage production**

**Physical location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Manage production: Prune to optimize production or desired characteristics of fruit, floral, timber, canes or other products.

**Specification**

Selectively remove branches or other parts to achieve desired production levels (specify parts to be removed and/or types, sizes, number and locations of cuts).

**Additional information**

Consider seasonal timing of pruning, as well as species and cultivar characteristics.

Specify optimum maintenance interval to achieve desired production.

## **B-10 Rejuvenation of Shrubs**

**Physical location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Rejuvenation of shrubs: Prune to stimulate new growth, restore desired form, and/or to remove dead, damaged, diseased or infested parts (consider species and typical form, current condition, seasonal timing, and ability to tolerate rejuvenation pruning).

**Specification**

Reduce or head branches or leaders at or near ground level (specify location of cuts, branches/leaders to be removed).

## **B-11 Manage Wildlife Habitat**

**Physical location** (note)

**Objective** (list and describe)

Prune to conserve or enhance wildlife habitat (provide some specific detail for the species and/or habitat).

Manage wildlife habitat: Pruning activities may influence wildlife, either directly through disturbance, or by manipulation of habitat such as food supplies, cover, nesting or roosting sites. Pruning activities may violate certain regulations, including the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Endangered Species Act and other federal, state and local regulations. Arborists should modify work procedures as appropriate to avoid killing, injuring or disturbing protected wildlife.

Pruning to improve or manipulate wildlife habitat may be part of an overall strategy across an entire property, park, right-of-way or other management area. The practice may involve multiple pruning objectives, pruning systems and other strategies beyond the scope of a pruning standard.

**Specification**

Specify retention or enhancement of desired wildlife features that do not pose unacceptable risk, such as perches, cavities or other nesting sites (specify features to retain or enhance, parts to be removed, and types, sizes and locations of cuts).

Prune to stimulate growth, cover, fruit or seed production (specify branches to be pruned, or retained, and seasonal timing appropriate for species).

**C. Specification template form**

**1. Actual location of the plant(s) and/or tree(s) to be pruned:**

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**2. Pruning objective(s) – see B. *Specification writing guidance based on various objectives*:**

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**3. Pruning system:**

- Natural
- Pollarding
- Topiary

- Espalier
- Pleaching
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Pruning specifications detailing the work to be done:**

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**5. Additional information:**

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