This discussion of the latest ANSI A300 standard & ISA BMP for tree risk assessment will help urban foresters & arborists (consulting, city, commercial) develop tree risk specifications for their urban tree management program or type of business...

It also briefly discusses the broader issue of a comprehensive urban tree risk management program as the “framework” for urban tree risk assessment.

Urban Forestry South is the Southern Region’s urban & community forestry Technology Transfer Center which supports U&CF programs through state agencies and municipalities. Regardless of the vocabulary that I use during this presentation, no words should be construed or are implied to have any legal context; consult a lawyer for legal advice.

In this presentation I will define the “framework” for tree risk assessment as a comprehensive urban tree risk management program as defined by Pokorny et.al. (2003 NA-03-03).

And then I’ll briefly review the ANSI system and discuss the development of a tree risk specification that meets the newest ANSI standard for tree risk.

How many of you have developed written tree care specifications based on any of the ANSI A300 standards?

Written specifications, based on an industry standard, should provide better contract compliance and reduce the chance for misinterpretation of results (i.e. the written reports).
Ideally (and preferably), tree risk assessments should be a component of a more comprehensive urban tree risk management program for a municipality or larger commercial clients.

The current Best Management Practice (BMP) for such a comprehensive approach is: Urban Tree Risk Management (A Community Guide to Program Design and Implementation) Jill Pokorny et.al., 2003, NA-03-03

View on-line or download: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/utrmm/

Developing a comprehensive approach to managing risk in urban areas is defined in ten steps...

Step 7 discusses various risk rating systems and is located in Chapter 3 of the Pokorny manual; the ANSI A300 Standard (for tree risk) and the ISA BMP for Tree Risk Assessment were published since this publication, but should be reviewed in this step of the program development. Unless there is some significant over-riding issues, Certified Arborists should be using the standard and the BMP for tree risk assessments.

ISA will be providing TRAQ workshops in 2013 that teach the ISA BMP approach that I will introduce later in this presentation. The PNW Chapter of ISA has provided similar training with the TRACE workshops. TRAQ is basically superseding TRACE (presenter’s interpretation of the current status of these initiatives).

The Pokorny manual is designed for communities, but applicable to any property owner.
Risk... is the combination of the likelihood of an event and the severity of the potential consequences. In the context of trees, risk is the likelihood of a conflict or tree failure occurring and affecting a target, and (combined with) the severity of the associated consequences – injury, damage, disruption.

The ISA BMP (and the ANSI A300 Standard it is based on) are compliant with the ISO Risk Standard (ISO 31010) and the definitions that we use should be consistent with that international standard.

Risk (from ISA BMP: Tree Risk Assessment)...
- Probabilities involved
- An event
- Consequences (harm) with some level of severity (or concern)

Conflict... e.g. tree obstructs stop sign visibility at intersection, or tree limbs/branches touching power distribution lines

Hazard... Is a likely source of harm (or the consequence).
In relation to trees, a hazard is the tree part(s) identified as a likely source of harm.

Hazard (from ISA BMP: Tree Risk Assessment)...
- What is the likely source (e.g. limb, branch, whole tree) of the assessed harm (i.e. consequence)

Risk assessment is the “next” step after the urban tree risk management framework “sets the stage”...

Assessment and evaluation (from ISA BMP: Tree Risk Assessment)...
- Systematic process
- Identify
- Analyze
- Evaluate
- There are standards (i.e. ANSI A300 Part 9) that should be followed when developing this assessment process

Evaluation (from ISA BMP: Tree Risk Assessment)...

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- Comparing the assessed risk to your experience and/or expectations (i.e. risk threshold; how much harm is acceptable to you)

### ANSI Standards
- American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- Development of American National Standards (ANS) by accrediting the procedures of standards developing organizations
- Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA)
  - ANSI A300 standards are voluntary industry consensus standards (arboriculture)
  - ANSI A300 Standards are divided into multiple parts, each focusing on a specific aspect of woody plant management
- [www.TCIA.org](http://www.TCIA.org)

ANSI (American National Standards Institute) accredits organizations to develop voluntary standards for their industry or profession.

TCIA is the accrediting organization for arboriculture and organizes the (ANSI Standards Committee) ASC A300 committee with representatives from a broad and diverse group of industrial and governmental organizations.

### Arboriculture Standards
- Part 2: Soil Management (2011)
- Part 3: Supplemental Support Systems
- Part 4: Lightning Protection Systems
- Part 5: Management
- Part 6: Planting & Transplanting
- Part 7: Integrated Vegetation Management
- Part 8: Root & Root Zone Management
- Part 9: Tree Risk Management (2011)
- Part 10: Integrated Pest Management
- Part 11: Urban Forest Products

Developed (green), under development (blue), and being revised (red).

Visit: [http://www.tcia.org/business/ansi-a300-standards](http://www.tcia.org/business/ansi-a300-standards) for descriptions and status
Standards vs Specifications

- Standards are performance standards
- NOT used as job specifications
- Job specifications should be clearly stated and detailed and contain measurable criteria.
- Writing specifications can be simple or complex
  - written in a format that suits your company/job
  - specifications consist of two sections
    - general
    - detailed
- ANSI A300 Part 9 Section 1.2 Purpose
  - “for developing written specifications”
  - Used by:
    - federal, state, municipal, and private entities

The “standard” clearly identifies the performance standards used to develop arboricultural specifications specific to your job or contract and appropriate for all levels of ownership and consulting.

You should not say “Perform a tree risk assessment to the ANSI A300 (Part 9)-2011 Tree Risk standard” in an RFP, RFB, proposal, or quotation for professional services.

See Section 1.2 Purpose “for developing written specifications.”

Developing and consistently using a risk specification the ANSI A300 Standard will:

- reduce misunderstandings related to the scope of the risk evaluation for a tree owner
- clearly define the qualifications of the arborists
- clearly define the assessment techniques to be used
- provide better contract compliance
- reduce the chance for misinterpretation of results (i.e. the written reports)
- help arborists become more consistent with their risk assessments and with colleagues assessments over time

Standard Components - Risk

- ANSI A300
- Scope
- Purpose
- Application
- Part 9 – Tree Risk
  - Purpose
  - Reason
  - Implementation
- Safety
- Normative References (e.g. Z133 Safety)
- Definitions

The “standard” reviews the ANSI system and introduces the tree risk standard (Part 9).

Safety, other standards that apply, and definitions are presented.
Slide 12

ANSI A300 Tree Risk & Urban Tree Risk Management
An Introduction

Questions or Comments!

Any questions or comments from this quick introduction to Urban Tree Risk Management or ANSI?

Slide 13

Part 9 Risk Assessment Specification Components
1. Tree Structure Assessment Practices
2. Levels of Assessment
3. Target Identification
4. Analysis & Reporting
5. Owner Determination

The “standard” defines the written tree risk specification requirements.

The basic outline (requirements) of a properly constructed specification based on the Standard.

Slide 14

Risk Standard - Outline
• Tree Structure Assessment Practices
  • Objective (of specifications)
  • context
  • intended use
  • scope of work
  • General (indicates who is qualified)
  • Scope of Work
    • tree location or selection criteria
    • level and details of the risk assessment
    • type of report
    • timeframe for reporting (when)
    • report presentation (who, where)
  • mitigation

The “standard” then outlines the specific requirements for the risk assessment specification.
The standard defines three distinct levels of assessment that may be used by a qualified arborist.

The increasing levels (1 to 3) require closer and more detailed assessments.

Level 3 requires the most advanced techniques (possibly multiple) and should result in the most accurate of assessments (i.e. lower chance of missing significant defects and their associated risk).

I think “lean assessment” and “evaluation of target” are components of Level 1 and 2 (i.e. not unique here at Level 3) but for Level 3 may imply monitoring lean change over an extended timeframe.

Sounding and drilling (i.e. small diameter bits) may also be common techniques for Level 2 for many arborists. Remember, Level 2 does not preclude use of any of these techniques.

The standard outline includes the method for determining the target and details on data analysis and reporting. In the ISA BMP the concept of “target zone” is used to help determine the role targets play in the final risk rating.

This includes a requirement “risk advisory” when mitigation does NOT call for removal, and “residual risk” for all mitigation recommendations.
Slide 18

**Risk Standard - Outline**
- Owner Determination (i.e. responsibilities)
- repeat or make advanced assessments
- determine actions (i.e. schedule)
- implement
- follow-up recommendations
- monitoring
- mitigation
- prune
- remove
- move target

The final element of the standard is the statement of owner responsibilities (i.e. determination).

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Slide 19

**Part 9 Risk Assessment**
1. Tree Structure Assessment Practices
2. Levels of Assessment
3. Target Identification
4. Analysis & Reporting
5. Owner Determination

The basic outline (requirements) of a properly constructed specification based on the Standard for final review.

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Slide 20

**ANSI A300 Tree Risk & Urban Tree Risk Management**
An Introduction

Questions or Comments!

Any questions or comments from this quick introduction to arboricultural standards?
Example Tree Risk Specification

A “generic” tree risk assessment specification (NOT to be copied) for municipalities that are requesting bids and/or contracting for tree risk assessments, or for consulting arborists that are providing this professional service for clients.

Consult the ANSI A300 (Part 9)-2011 Tree Risk Assessment standard and your legal counsel when developing risk specifications.

Do NOT copy this example risk specification verbatim.

General section with:

- Title (line 1)
- Statement of applicability (lines 2-5)
- Purpose (lines 5-8)
- Definitions (lines 9-24) – add definitions as needed for your RFB or contract.

Example Tree Risk Specification

A “generic” tree risk assessment specification (NOT to be copied) for municipalities that are requesting bids and/or contracting for tree risk assessments, or for consulting arborists that are providing this professional service for clients.

Consult the ANSI A300 (Part 9)-2011 Tree Risk Assessment standard and your legal counsel when developing risk specifications.

General section (con’t) with:

- Organizational context (who is involved and under what circumstances) (lines 25-34)
- Tree risk assessment objectives (lines 35-40)
- Professional credentials of the arborists (lines 43-54)
A “generic” tree risk assessment specification (NOT to be copied) for municipalities that are requesting bids and/or contracting for tree risk assessments, or for consulting arborists that are providing this professional service for clients.

Consult the ANSI A300 (Part 9)-2011 Tree Risk Assessment standard and your legal counsel when developing risk specifications.

Scope of work: (starting line 55)

- Identified trees (lines 58-63)
- Boundaries and conditions (lines 59-61)
- Assessment protocol (lines 64-71)
- Mitigation recommendations are required (line 72)

Levels of assessment: (starting line 73)

- Statement of applicability (line 74-75)
- Level 1 (lines 76-83)
- Level 2 (lines 84-97)
- Tools required/permitted (lines 98-99)

Levels of assessment: (starting line 73)

- Level 3 (lines 100-122)
- Disclaimer for all levels included (lines 123-124)
A “generic” tree risk assessment specification (NOT to be copied) for municipalities that are requesting bids and/or contracting for tree risk assessments, or for consulting arborists that are providing this professional service for clients.

Consult the ANSI A300 (Part 9)-2011 Tree Risk Assessment standard and your legal counsel when developing risk specifications.

Standard components:

- Target identification (lines 125-129)
- Analysis & reporting (lines 130-134)
- Written report (lines 135-139)

Closing statements:

- Risk advisories (lines 140-144)
- Owner determination (lines 145-148)

Also reference any applicable contracts, RFPs, RFBs, or required report templates.
Any questions or comments about the example risk specification?

Any questions or comments from this quick introduction to ANSI, arboricultural standards, tree risk, tree defects, and rating systems?


The BMP is designed and intended for arborists that do tree risk assessments, not tree owners or managers. It does NOT address comprehensive tree risk management.

Arborists should READ the ISA BMP Preface.

This system uses two inter-related matrices to define and arrive at a “risk rating”.

In the first matrix, failure potential (the rows: improbable to imminent) are intersected with probability of target impact (the columns: very low to high). This matrix rating is then transferred to Matrix II (the “Risk Matrix”).

Matrix I values are rows (combination of failure potential & impact onto a target) that are intersected with expected consequences to the target (the columns: negligible to severe).

The intersection represents the “assessed risk” based on the three components:

- likelihood of failure (i.e. failure potential)
- likelihood of impacting (affecting) a target
- consequences of that impact

and is used to develop mitigation recommendations.

Tree defect observations and data are collected to “synthesize” into the rows & columns of ISA BMP matrices.

Three similar components:

- likelihood of impacting (affecting) a target [target rating incorporates “value” & presence]
- consequences of that impact [size of part affects consequences along with “value” in the first component]
- likelihood of failure (i.e. failure potential)

By definition, there is always SOME part that WILL fail; but, there may NOT be any target in the area of the failing tree (part).

Rating systems help decision-makers determine mitigation actions to take and the order in which tree risk should be addressed.

Like “specifications”, rating systems are consistent “yardsticks” that can help arborists become more consistent with their risk assessments and with colleagues assessments over time.

Developing and consistently using a tree risk specification the ANSI A300 Standard will:

- reduce misunderstandings related to the scope of the risk evaluation for a tree owner
- clearly define the qualifications of the arborists
- clearly define the assessment techniques to be used
- provide better contract compliance
- reduce the chance for misinterpretation of results (i.e. the written reports)
- help arborists become more consistent with their risk assessments and with colleagues assessments over time
With a risk rating in four classes, low, moderate, high, and extreme it can be difficult to get much significant prioritization (i.e. if you have 1 extreme and 30 highs the arborist needs some additional data to prioritize the 30!).

Any final questions or comments?

Use current arboricultural standards when developing your urban tree risk management plan...

- Primer on Risk Analysis: decision Making Under Uncertainty (Chapter 1) – CRC Press – Charles Yoe – 2012
- ANSI A300 (Part 9) – Tree Risk Assessment – TCIA – 2011
The eLearn Urban Forestry website(s) http://elearn.sref.info/ offers Module 6 training.

Also available at CFE Group for ISA credits (http://cfegroup.org/training/modules/list).


A PDF of this presentation will be at www.UrbanForestrySouth.org and also on the IAA website.

“Quick Search” with ‘IAA ANSI Risk’ (no quotes

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**Example Tree Risk Specification**

**Purpose**

These specifications define the context and scope of the UFST post-disaster rapid tree risk assessments that help communities mitigate storm-related tree risk that affects targets on public property.

**Definitions**

- **Controlling Authority** - an agency, organization, or corporate entity with the legal authority and/or obligation to manage individual trees or tree populations (i.e. the “owner”).
- **Improved property** - property that undergoes regular maintenance (i.e. infrastructure maintenance, tree and other landscape maintenance, e.g. mowing, brush/road control).
- **Natural Disaster** - a storm event that causes tree damage that affects public risk; may or may not be a federally or state declared disaster (e.g. ice storm, hurricane, straight line wind, tornado).
- **Private tree(s)** - tree(s) growing on privately-owned parcel(s) and legally maintained by the land-owner.
- **Public tree(s)** - tree(s) growing on publicly-owned land and legally maintained by the controlling authority.

Specific language from other tree risk specifications...

- **Urban Forest Strike Team (www.UFST.org)** – specific language for the risk assessment task/project/contract that is specific to natural disasters and coordination with FEMA.

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**Example Tree Risk Specification**

**Organizational context**

Urban Forest Strike Teams (UFST) are self-contained, professionally trained Certified Arborists or urban foresters from state forestry agencies, other state and municipal agencies, consulting and commercial arboricultural firms, the USDA Forest Service, and other federal agencies that are specifically trained to assess risk on storm-damaged trees. These teams are deployed to assist communities with risk mitigation of storm-damaged trees, retain as many viable trees as possible, and document trees that meet FEMA debris management criteria for Public Assistance reimbursement.

The municipality (i.e. the controlling authority) will request UFST assistance through the state forester, will identify and prioritize public property for tree risk assessments, and will work with the UFST Team Leader to evaluate target characteristics.

Specific language from other tree risk specifications...

- **Urban Forest Strike Team (www.UFST.org)** – specific language for the risk assessment task/project/contract that is specific to natural disasters and coordination with FEMA.
The objective of the Urban Forest Strike Team (UFST) post-disaster rapid tree risk assessment is to identify the risk that storm-damaged trees pose to people and property on publicly managed land (e.g., parks, rights-of-way, public buildings, etc.) in areas designated by the controlling authority as storm-affected, and to make professional recommendations to mitigate that risk. The risk assessment may also assist the controlling authority with prioritization of the recommended mitigation.

Specific language from other tree risk specifications...

- Urban Forest Strike Team (www.UFST.org) – specific language for the risk assessment task/project/contract that is specific to natural disasters and coordination with FEMA.