



Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo (NPC)

City Parks House
40 De Korte Street
Braamfontein

P O Box 2824
Johannesburg
2000

Tel +27(0) 11 712 6600
Fax +27(0) 11 403 4495
www.jhbcityparksandzoo.com

Media Statement

Thursday, 27 June 2024

For Immediate Release

City Parks beefs up bylaws to tackle illegal, seasonal tree-felling

Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo (JCPZ), the custodians of street trees and public open spaces in Joburg, has adopted a tough stance to curb the illegal removal and felling of street trees.

As a deterrent, Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo has put in place a new set of penalties and fines and will be working closely with enforcement agencies and the Municipal Courts to ensure non-complying residents and businesses are held accountable for the illegal removal, setting alight, or pruning of street trees and fallen leaves.

The city's tree canopy is particularly at risk over the winter and autumn months when there is a surge in reports of illegal felling and requests to remove trees.



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These requests are often related to falling leaves obstructing pools and drainage systems or obstructing sunlight and solar systems or in the case of businesses obstructing entrance points or advertising signage.

Residents are urged to be extra conscious of the high value and importance of fallen leaves and trees and should cover their pools, bag fallen leaves for collection, or use leaves for composting.

Street trees are the property of the City of Johannesburg and are protected by strict *Street Tree bylaws* which prohibits the removal or disturbance of trees. In all instances, residents and businesses must reach out to Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo (JCPZ) for assistance.

The bylaws state that 'no person may damage any tree on any public road within the municipal area of the Council and that, only JCPZ is authorised to remove, maintain and prune street trees.



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In line with the City's by-laws, residents are warned that punitive measures will be applied for the removal of street trees. Fines are determined by the size, species, age, location, health, and heritage value of the tree. These fines can vary from a few thousand rands to up to R327K per tree based on the new measures to stem the illegal felling of trees.

Johannesburg remains one of the most densely populated cities globally, with high levels of urbanization, and therefore the critical presence of trees, act as natural air filters, and ensure that the health of residents is bolstered, is vital! The City's tree canopy plays a crucial role in combating and reducing the effects of climate change and promotes a sense of tranquility and beauty to boost social, economic, environmental, and health benefits.

The removal of healthy trees has far-reaching implications on food security and has the potential to harm birdlife, plants, and the city's already threatened biodiversity. Green lungs play a critical role in improving the well-being and health of people living in cities.

City Parks urges residents and communities to refrain from illegally removing and felling trees and as we reach the end of World Environment Month, celebrated annually in June, we need to rather plant trees.



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Illegal tree removals and requests to prune or fell trees must be reported to Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo at 011 712 6600/6617 or to Joburg Connect at 011 375 5555 or joburgconnect@joburg.org.za

ENDS

Issued on behalf of Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo

Media inquiries can be directed to: Jenny Moodley, Spokesperson, Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo: 082 803 0748, E: jmoodley@jhbcityparks.com or to Noeleen Mattera, Media Relations 079 994 6345; E: nmattera@jhbcityparks.com, www.jhbcityparks.com. Follow us on Twitter @JoburgParksZoo or Facebook.

Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo is wholly owned by the City of Johannesburg and is responsible for managing, maintaining and preserving parks, open spaces, cemeteries, nature reserves, street trees, and the Johannesburg Zoo. Through their work, JCPZ strives to enhance the quality of life and promote a healthy, active lifestyle for the well-being of all residents.