

Elm Disposal Risk Mitigation (2025)

The following risks have been identified with waiving the elm disposal fee for residential and commercial customers.

Disposal of healthy trees

Waiving the disposal fee for elm wood can encourage the disposal of healthy trees by making the cost to dispose lower. Steps can be taken to ensure that only certified arborists can obtain disposal permits for larger quantities of elm wood but research of approaches in other municipalities shows that this can be challenging to administer. Research shows that a waived elm disposal fee has not led to significant quantities of healthy elm trees being cut down and disposed. Education on the value and importance of trees can further mitigate this concern. The risks of DED in a scenario where proper action is not taken to limit the spread are greater than the risk of residents/ commercial companies disposing of healthy elm trees.

Elm wood disposal from outside of Saskatoon

Regulations currently allow transport of elm wood to a designated disposal site approved by the local municipality. There is a risk that more loads of elm wood from outside of Saskatoon come to the Saskatoon landfill. This risk is currently covered by Provincial regulations that require every person who prunes or removes an elm tree to dispose of the elm tree by transporting it to the nearest elm tree disposal site for the municipality in which the elm tree is located¹. The Saskatoon landfill can take steps to ensure this is happening by asking for proof of address or a postal code to confirm that is within Saskatoon City limits.

Waived landfill fees exceed estimates

Following the October 2023 pilot, the City saw a large spike in elm wood tonnage brought to the Saskatoon landfill in that month. The 2024 plan saw that offering a waived disposal fee throughout the year did not lead to a significant spike for annual tonnages. From 2022 to 2024, elm disposal tonnage fluctuated but remained within the expected range.

Monitoring actions:

- Tracking annual elm wood tonnage at the landfill.
- Contacting other landfills that accept elm wood near Saskatoon and seeing if there is a fee for disposal.

Mitigation actions:

- Educate residents on the value and benefits of trees and the urban canopy.
- Work with the Province to coordinate DED response and advocate for strong education campaigns for all of Saskatchewan

¹ [The Dutch Elm Disease Regulations, 2005 \(Saskatchewan\)](#)