

**NYC**  
Department of  
Consumer Affairs

Jonathan Mintz  
Commissioner

Staff Counsel

42 Broadway  
9th Floor  
New York, NY 10004

+1 tel  
+1 fax

[nyc.gov/consumers](http://nyc.gov/consumers)

August 28, 2009

Re: A License is required for planting trees; a license is not required for pruning trees

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]

I am writing in response to your inquiry as to whether tree pruning and tree removal are activities that require a Home Improvement Contractor's ("HIC") license from the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs ("DCA" or "the Department.") The answer to your question is that tree pruning does not require an HIC license while tree removal does require a license.

Under NYC Administrative Code ("Code") §20-386, Home improvement "means the construction, repair, replacement, remodeling, alteration, . . .improvement, or addition to any land or building. . .and shall include. . .landscaping. . . ."

Landscaping requiring a license pursuant to the Code involves a change to the natural features of the land. Such activities include, but are not limited to, the planting or removal of trees or shrubs, the laying of sod, and the creation of gardens. Activities involving maintenance of the grounds, such as cutting grass, pruning trees or shrubs, and lawn care are not landscaping within the terms of the Code and do not require a license.

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED SIGNATURE]