

**Subject: Mulching Trees**

Approved: Patrick Bohlen

PROCEDURE:

**Mulching Trees**

INTENDED AUDIENCE:

LNR personnel performing mulching operations.

PURPOSE:

To train LNR person to install the required amount of mulch around trees campus wide to include:

- a. Newly Planted Trees (first 90 days)
- b. Construction trees
- c. Established trees

**I. Knowledge**

Operator should have a working knowledge of the following information:

What type of mulch will be used? What is the functional purpose of the mulch? How often will mulch need to be reapplied? How large should the mulching ring be? Is the mulch permanent or being used for establishment?

**II. Safety**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- a. Long Sleeved Shirts recommended
- b. Eye Protection
- c. Leather Gloves recommended
- d. Steel Toed Shoes
- e. If large equipment is being used to transport mulch or to load/unload mulch, be sure to wear hard hats and proper PPE for vehicle operation (LNR–SOP 201 Mulch Blower).

**III. Steps for Mulching Newly Planted Trees**

**A. Steps for Mulch (first 90 day)Trees**

**Note:** Establishment period (first 90 days): Only organic mulches should be used. Organic mulch contributes to soil structure, water retention properties and nutrient complexes.

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**1-a.** Apply mulch in a layer two to four inches (2" - 4") deep around the tree.

**CAUTION:** Excess mulch and mulch stacked against the trunk causes moisture to accumulate and can cause decay, limit gaseous exchange, and attract pests.

**2-a.** Determine the size of the mulching ring by examining the tree's diameter at breast height (DBH).

**Note:** Multiply the DBH (in inches) measurement by three (3) to determine the total diameter in feet of the mulching ring (i.e. A tree with two inches (2") DBH should have a mulching ring six feet (6') in diameter).

**Note:** Berms around newly planted trees should be no **more** than 3 inches of dirt with mulch contributing the majority of the height of the berm (2 inches of dirt = up to 6 inches of berm max).

**3-a.** Install mulch using shovel and rake into established mulching ring and do not allow mulch to touch the tree trunk.

**Note:** After one growing season, mulch ring should gradually be leveled, spread out and removed.

**B. Steps for Mulching Established Trees**

**Note:** Established trees require mulch to be two to four inches (2-4") deep as needed.

**1-b.** Rake out as much old mulch as possible and dispose of per supervisor's instructions.

**CAUTION:** Excess mulch and mulch stacked against the trunk causes moisture to accumulate and can cause decay, limit gaseous exchange, and attract pests.

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**2-b.** Using shovel and rake install mulch into established mulching ring and do not allow the mulch to touch the tree trunk.

**Note:** Mulching established trees is not necessary but can help reduce maintenance around trees and root competition.

**C. Steps for Mulching Construction Trees**

**Note:** Trees within construction zones and tree protection zones (TPZs) are often protected by temporary fencing in which case mulch does not need to be applied. In the case that heavy equipment needs to access or work within tree protection zones a temporary mulch layer should be applied.

**1-c.** Apply six to twelve inch (6"-12") layer of mulch to AT LEAST the drip line.

**Note:** Older, larger tree's roots can spread much farther than the drip line. To apply the proper diameter of mulch, a rule of thumb is for every one inch (1") DBH, one foot (1') diameter TPZ should be established.

**2-c.** Carefully removed or spread out mulch at two to four inches (2"- 4") deep when construction ends.

**IV. After Mulching Trees**

- a. Clean and Return all hand tools to staging cage.