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## Information on Dutch Elm Disease for Municipalities

*Municipalities have a role to play in inspecting for the tree disease*

Dutch Elm Disease (DED) is caused by a fungal pathogen that affects American Elm trees. Alberta is home to the largest stand of DED-free American Elms in North America. This includes trees on municipal properties, shelterbelts, and on rural properties. The value of these elms is estimated to be over \$2 billion.

The pathogens that cause DED are regulated in Alberta under the [Agricultural Pests Act](#) (APA). As part of the APA, municipalities must appoint inspectors. Under Section 10, the local authority of a municipality shall appoint a sufficient number of inspectors to carry out the APA and its regulations within the municipality.

For the purposes of checking trees or elm firewood, Section 17 of the APA stipulates that “land” does not include a private dwelling.

An inspector may, for the purpose of carrying out the inspector’s duties:

- ◆ Enter at any reasonable hour on any land to inspect the land or any buildings, property, or livestock on the land
- ◆ Take specimens of a pest or nuisance and of any matter or thing that contains or is suspected of containing a pest or nuisance

Some Alberta municipalities have DED bylaws in place and municipalities can appoint bylaw enforcement officers under the authority of section 555 and 556 of the [Municipal Government Act](#) (MGA). A community peace officer is not authorized to enforce municipal bylaws unless they are also appointed under the authority of the MGA, or if the specific bylaw states it can be enforced by a community peace officer working for that municipality.

For more information on DED and the role of municipalities, see the [Government of Alberta pamphlet](#).

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