What Dallas Homeowners Should Check After a Storm Damages a Tree

Act quickly but stay safe

When a storm rolls through Dallas, the aftermath can leave your property with damaged trees, downed limbs, and sometimes a fallen tree blocking a driveway or leaning against the house. Knowing what to look for in the first hours after the wind dies down can make the difference between a manageable cleanup and a serious safety hazard. This guide walks through the key points every homeowner should inspect after a storm hits, with a focus on practical steps that keep you and your family safe while you assess the situation.

Storms in this part of Georgia often bring high winds that can twist trunks, split branches, and uproot trees that looked perfectly healthy the day before. The first thing to remember is that a damaged tree is unpredictable. A limb that seems stable can shift, and a trunk that appears solid may be under hidden stress. That is why the very first check is not about the tree itself, but about your own position relative to it.



Check your immediate safety first

Before you step outside, look from inside your home. Is any part of a tree touching or resting on the house? Can you see a power line caught in the branches? If a tree has hit the roof, stay inside and listen for cracking sounds. If you suspect a power line is involved, keep everyone away and call the utility company. Never approach a tree that is touching a power line, even if the line looks dead. Electricity can arc through wet wood or travel down a trunk that is still touching the ground. This is a job for professionals who know how to handle power line hazards.

Once you are sure no electrical danger exists, you can step outside and begin a careful visual inspection. Walk around the property and look at every tree that was exposed to the storm. Start from the top and work down. Look for missing branches, torn bark, or a split trunk. A split trunk is a serious sign that the tree may not be salvageable and could need removal. If the trunk is split partway through, the tree is structurally compromised. Even if it stays upright for now, a moderate wind could bring it down later.

Inspect for hanging limbs and other overhead hazards

One of the most dangerous things after a storm is a hanging limb that got caught in the canopy. These are sometimes called widowmakers for a reason. They may look stuck, but they can fall without warning, especially as the wind picks up again or as the wood dries and shifts. If you see a large branch wedged high in a tree, do not stand under it. Do not throw ropes or try to yank it down. Mark the area and keep people and pets away until a tree service can remove it safely.



Also check for limbs that are cracked but still attached. A crack that runs along the underside of a branch or through the crotch where the branch meets the trunk is a sign that the limb could break off in the next gust. Smaller cracked branches you might be able to remove yourself if they are within easy reach and you have the right tools, but anything above shoulder height or thicker than your wrist is best left to a professional. The risk of the branch swinging or the ladder slipping is too high for a do-it-yourself approach.

Look for roof impact and structural damage

A fallen tree or a large limb that hit the roof can cause damage that is not always obvious from ground level. After the storm, check for visible dents, broken shingles, or displaced flashing. If you have access to the attic, look for signs of water intrusion, such as wet insulation or dark stains on the wood. Even a small puncture in the roof can let in enough water to cause mold and rot over the following weeks. If the tree is still resting on the roof, do not try to move it yourself. The weight of the tree could be holding the roof in place, and shifting it could cause the damaged area to collapse.

Roof impact often goes hand in hand with a blocked driveway. If a tree has fallen across your driveway, you may be stuck at home until it is cleared. This is one of the most common reasons homeowners call for fast help after storm damage. A professional crew can cut and remove the tree quickly, often within a few hours, so you can get your car out and go about your day. The key is to call early, because after a big storm, tree services get booked up fast. Waiting until the next day could mean a longer delay.

Assess the root system and soil condition

A tree that has tipped over or is leaning heavily may have damaged roots. Walk around the base of the tree and look for lifted soil, exposed roots, or a crack in the ground encircling the trunk. If the root plate is partially exposed, the tree is unstable. Even if it looks like it could stand, it may fall in the next storm or even under its own weight on a calm day. A leaning tree that was upright before the storm should be evaluated by an arborist. Sometimes a lean is just the tree settling after losing a major limb, but often it means the roots have lost their grip.



In Dallas, the clay soil common in this part of Georgia can make root problems worse. When soil gets saturated from heavy rain, roots lose their hold more easily. A tree that seemed secure in dry weather can tip over when the ground turns to mud. If you notice soil heaving or a gap between the trunk and the ground, that tree needs professional attention. Site stabilization may be possible for smaller trees, but for larger ones, removal is often the safer choice.

Plan for debris cleanup and fallen tree removal

Once you have identified the hazards, the next step is figuring out what to do with the mess. Branches, leaves, and chunks of wood will be scattered across your yard. Some of it you can handle yourself with a rake and a pruning saw, but larger pieces require equipment. A fallen tree that is too big to cut with a handsaw needs a chainsaw and someone who knows how to use it safely. Tangled debris piles can hide sharp ends or spring-loaded branches, so be cautious when pulling things apart.

If the tree has fallen across a walkway, driveway, or into the house itself, you need fallen tree removal that can handle the weight and the logistics. Professional crews have the tools to cut the tree into manageable sections, haul them away, and grind the stump if needed. They also have the experience to work around power lines, gas meters, and other utilities that might be buried in the debris. Trying to clear a large tree on your own can lead to injury or property damage, and it often takes longer than you expect.

When to call a professional

Not every storm-damaged tree needs to come down. A tree that lost a few small branches but still has a solid trunk and a full canopy may recover on its own. But if the tree has a split trunk, a large hanging limb, visible root damage, or is leaning toward your house, it is time to call a tree service. The same goes for any situation where you are unsure about the stability of the tree. A certified arborist can assess the tree and tell you whether it can be saved or needs removal. This is not a decision to rush, but it is also not one to put off. A damaged tree that stays upright today could fall on your home in the next windstorm.



Many homeowners wait because they think the damage looks minor or they hope the tree will heal. But a crack in the trunk does not heal. A hanging limb does not become safe over time. The sooner you get an expert opinion, the sooner you can plan your next steps. If you need fast help after storm damage, a local tree service that does emergency response can often come out the same day to secure the property and prevent further harm.

Final checks before the next storm

After the immediate cleanup is done, take a few minutes to look at the rest of your trees. Did the storm reveal any weaknesses you had not noticed before? A tree that lost a major limb may have had a hidden cavity or rot. Walk around the property and look for dead branches, cracks in the bark, or mushrooms growing on the trunk. These are signs of decay that make a tree more likely to fail in a future storm. Pruning deadwood and removing weak trees now can reduce the risk of damage later. A little preventive work goes a long way when the next round of high winds comes through.