

# ODED'S WEEKLY REPORT

## 07-18-2025

**INTERFERENCE WITH LANDSCAPE OPERATIONS** – Last month, we briefly spoke about why residents should not approach crew members of a tree company that was working on-site. This time around, we would like to expand on this subject matter, speaking mainly on the wider problem this issue causes to the Association's operations.

As acknowledged in the past, it is quite understandable that residents have different perspectives on how things should work. For example, some residents would like a specific shrub to be trimmed one way or another. Others may feel that fertilization and/or pesticides are not good for the environment and shouldn't be used. While some don't see a problem with leaving a pile of personal yard waste for the crew to pick up. Therefore, no one should be surprised when some residents may approach the Association landscape services providers with a "quick question" or a "small favor." Unfortunately, however, quick questions and small favors still fall into Newton's Third Law of Motion. That is, there is always a reaction to these small actions, some of which can get costly. Here is why.

First, direct requests or directives create confusion, especially when language barriers exist, leading to misunderstandings and unmet expectations. Here is an example. A resident may feel that a specific area in the front yard should not be treated for weeds for one reason or another. Therefore, the resident directs the Weed Control Technician not to treat that area. As a result of a language barrier, the tech thinks the directive is to skip the entire yard altogether. A couple of months may pass before the Association receives an aggrieved complaint from the resident who demands to know why the yard is being ignored altogether.

Secondly, approaching crew members, especially those engaged in potentially hazardous tasks like tree trimming, can pose serious safety risks to residents and crew members alike. For example, this week, while driving around the community, it was noted that a resident approached a worker on a boom lift to request to trim another branch on the tree. Needless to say, approaching a person who is working 20 feet in the air, wearing hearing protection, and focusing on trimming large tree limbs can be a recipe for disaster. A moment's loss of focus could lead to falling branches and unwarranted injury.

Thirdly, interference can disrupt the carefully planned workflow established by the landscape service providers and the Association, impacting the efficiency and quality of work. More often than not, we are faced with a situation in which a resident asks the pruning crew to cut this shrub or tree in a specific way. While some may believe these are minor requests, these interruptions, whether small or large, affect the flow of the crews, shift focus, and/or deviate from the original plan. As a result, the crew may need to rush to complete the following yards to meet time constraints. As a result, this leads to missed steps, reduction in attention to detail, and delays.

Finally, even seemingly simple questions or favors may have significant financial consequences for the Association. Not many think about it, but in reality, "small favors" are not free. Yes, picking a small pile of yard waste created by a resident or damaging one plant because it was overpruned are not a big deal. However, small piles add up eventually to a full truck and dead plants to a large sale order.

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Disposal of a truck's yard waste, using as an example, costs about \$500 without taking into consideration the travel time to and from the landfill. What about costly delays? When the crew is behind because it has to do two or more trips to the landfill or spend an hour each week answering a question or addressing a request, it causes delays. Besides promoting frustration among those whose yards are being unkempt, the cumulative effect leads to increased costs either by the addition of services or by increased annual contractual fees.

In sum, providing directives to any landscape contractor is strongly discouraged. More often than not, it leads to miscommunication, which ultimately causes frustration among residents. Furthermore, it may clash with our primary concern, which is the safety of everyone in the community. In addition, disruption of the workflow causes rushed jobs, reduced attention to detail, and impacts the overall quality of the landscape services. And finally, it results in additional costs for the Association due to increased labor, disposal fees, project delays, replacement of overpruned plant material, etc.

To better serve the community in addressing matters as above, therefore, the Association developed the Landscape Policy & Process, which is based on 20+ years of accumulated experience. Copy of it can be found below, on the Association's website, and on the Engage Portal. Please make sure to the a moment and read it.

### LAKERIDGE FALLS LANDSCAPE POLICY & PROCESS

APPROVED: 12/13/24

Article VI Maintenance and Repairs, 6.1 Maintenance of Lots, (b), (i), of the LakeRidge Falls' governing documents, state that:

**"The Association shall perform, or cause to be performed, maintenance (including mowing, fertilizing, watering, pruning, and replacing, and controlling disease and insects), of all lawns and landscaping installed on the Lot as part of the initial construction on the Lots, specifically excluding landscaping within any enclosed area not readily accessible from outside the dwelling and landscaping added by the Owner or occupants of a Lot after issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the dwelling on the Lot."**

To carry out this responsibility and to ensure a consistent Community-Wide Standard for landscape care, the Board of Directors and the Landscape Committee established the following policy and process document. Decisions regarding landscape maintenance and replacement shall be guided by this policy.

- The Association shall contract with a professional landscape maintenance company. The contract shall include provisions and consistent performance standards for lawn and landscape care designed to implement the responsibility specified in Article VI of LakeRidge Falls' governing documents.
- Areas of initially installed landscaping shall be under the exclusive care and maintenance responsibility of the Association.
- Lot Owners may not "opt-out" of Association maintenance of initially installed landscaping.
- The Association will not assume responsibility for the replacement of landscaping on a Lot where the owner and/or resident interferes with the contractor's ability to provide contracted services.
- Replacement of initially installed landscaping shall be the responsibility of the landscape contractor at the Association expense, within budgeted amounts, and of a specimen type and size appropriate to the original installation and design.

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APPROVED: 12/13/24

- A different type and/or size of a plant will be used if deemed more appropriate for the situation and consistent with the original overall design and Community-Wide Standard.
- Lot Owners desiring a larger sized and/or different plant material may at their option, pay the difference in cost between the recommended plant material and the desirable plant material size and/or species.

The following process is established by the Board of Directors and Landscape Committee to ensure that owners' concerns about landscape maintenance are heard and responded to in a timely and appropriate manner.

- The Community Association Manager is responsible to provide oversight and coordination of all landscape matters, handle all landscape service requests, and communicate with the landscape contractor.
- The Community Association Manager operates under the supervision of the Board of Directors Liaison to the Landscape Committee.
- The landscape contractor only acts upon direction from the Board of Directors and/or the Community Association Manager
- The Lot Owner/resident completes a Landscape Service Request Form and submits it to the Community Association Manager.
- The Community Association Manager conveys a recommendation to the landscape contractor for action.
- The landscape contractor completes the work within two weeks of the approved work order and reports to the Community Association Manager once the work is complete.



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This policy and process ensure that concerns regarding landscape maintenance are heard and responded to in a timely and appropriate manner. Therefore, as many know, residents are asked to submit landscape service requests instead of directing requests directly to the landscape contractors. Please, and again please, understand that providing directives to crew members almost always achieves the opposite of what one would hope to achieve. Therefore, we kindly ask all to follow the Association's Landscape Policy & Process. Your understanding and cooperation in this important matter are greatly appreciated.

**TREE TRIMMING** – On a somewhat related matter, ACI, LakeRidge Falls' tree maintenance company, finished this week another phase in the trimming of the Association's oak trees. They are scheduled to come again in a couple of weeks to conclude this project, which will involve addressing trees that might have been missed, trimming trees that require additional attention, removing distressed or dead trees, and thinning the trees along Brosche Lake Ln. As a reminder, ACI performs the work based on best trimming practices as provided by the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and/or according to the Florida Fire Prevention Code, which requires roads to have an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 ft. 6 in.

With this in mind, here are a couple of "before and after" pictures that best capture ACI's work to date.






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**SMOKE ALARM DETECTORS** – As every year, we urge all residents to inspect, and if needed replace their smoke alarm detectors. While some may feel they only need to replace the batteries, it is important to remind all that smoke alarm detectors have a life span of about 10 years as advised by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and as such should be replaced thereafter. With this in mind, please take a moment to go over the two important safety tips below which were published by NFPA regarding smoke alarm detectors . Please act on this important matter.

## Smoke Alarms at Home




**SMOKE ALARMS ARE A KEY PART** of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.

**SAFETY TIPS**

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- Current alarms on the market employ different types of technology including multi-sensing, which could include smoke and carbon monoxide combined.
- Today's smoke alarms will be more technologically advanced to respond to a multitude of fire conditions, yet mitigate false alarms.
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

**FACTS**

- ❗ A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- ❗ Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level. Smoke alarms should be connected so when one sounds, they all sound. Most homes do not have this level of protection.
- ❗ Roughly 3 out of 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.




**NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**  
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards

**LRF**  
LAKE RIDGE FALLS

[nfpa.org/education](http://nfpa.org/education) ©NFPA 2018

## Smoke Alarms for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing



Working smoke alarms save lives. However, people who are deaf or hard of hearing may not be able to depend on the traditional smoke alarm to alert them to a fire.

Install smoke alarms in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. For added safety, interconnect all the smoke alarms. If one sounds, they all sound. This gives people more time to escape.

**SAFETY TIPS**

- Smoke alarms and alert devices are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Strobe lights flash when the smoke alarm sounds. The lights warn people of a possible fire.
- When people who are deaf are asleep, a pillow or bed shaker can wake them so they can escape. The shaker is activated by the sound of a smoke alarm.
- When people who are hard of hearing are asleep, an alert device that uses a loud, mixed, low-pitched sound can wake them. They may find a pillow or bed shaker helpful. These devices are triggered by the sound of the smoke alarm.
- Research the products and select the ones that best meet your needs.

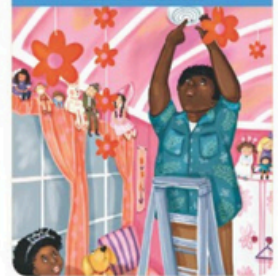
**WHERE TO FIND EQUIPMENT**

Search home improvement store websites or use a general search engine to look for strobe light smoke alarms. BRK/First Alert, Gentex, and Kidde brands offer this type of smoke alarm. Find smoke alarm accessories such as pillow or bed shakers, transmitters, and receivers at [lifetonesafety.com](http://lifetonesafety.com), [safeawake.com](http://safeawake.com) and [silentcall.com](http://silentcall.com). Choose devices that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory.

**FACT**

Home fire sprinklers keep fires small. This gives people more time to escape in a fire.

**AND DON'T FORGET...**  
Test all smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.



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Have a quiet and safe weekend,

Oded Neeman - LakeRidge Falls Community Manager