

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

ARBORIST TESTING INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

Anyone performing arborist services in Maine must first obtain an Arborist License. Candidates for an Arborist License must pass a test in Landscape, Utility, or both categories, demonstrating knowledge, skill, and capability to safely and professionally provide arborist services to the public.

An *Arborist Apprentice Permit* provides an opportunity for on-the-job training for new arborists; however, this is a training permit only and not a license to practice independently. No test is required to obtain an Arborist Apprentice Permit; those applying for a permit must work under the direct supervision of a licensed arborist.

DEFINITIONS

Arborist: A person who, for compensation, takes down or fells, diagnoses, or evaluates the condition of shade or ornamental trees; solicits, recommends, or supervises the treatment of those trees; or in any manner or for any purpose treats or cares for those trees. Treats or cares for include but is not limited to: pruning, trimming, and shaping of trees when the care requires the person to leave the ground as well as installing lightning protection, cabling, or bracing of trees.

Apprentice: an unlicensed individual working under the supervision of a licensed arborist.

***First-Class Landscape Arborist:** an individual licensed as an arborist who is primarily concerned with the care of shade or ornamental trees.

***First-Class Utility Arborist:** an individual licensed as an arborist who primarily works in the proximity of electrical transmission, distribution, and/or other utility lines.

***Master Landscape or *Master Utility Arborist:** an individual who has a minimum of five years of experience as a First-Class Arborist has successfully completed the Master Arborist examination and holds a valid Maine Pesticide Applicator License in the category 3A – Outdoor Ornamentals.

*Some utilities may require additional safety training for workers near their utility lines in addition to an arborist license.

STEPS IN EXAM PROCESS

1. The candidate completes the arborist exam application and submits it with the appropriate fees.
2. The Department mails the candidate an examination admission letter two weeks before the exam.
3. The candidate takes the exam.
4. The Department notifies the candidate of scores and licensing or re-take information.

APPLICATION AND FEES

Applications can be obtained on the Arborist Program website www.maine.gov/dacf/php/arborist or by calling 207-287-4515.

A study guide is available for purchase. It contains all the information covered on the arborist exam and is highly recommended for test preparation.

Candidates are strongly encouraged to apply to take both Landscape and Utility exams at the same time.

Study Guide: \$85.00

Exam Fees:

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| First-Class Landscape or Utility | \$ 60.00 |
| First-Class Landscape <u>and</u> Utility | \$ 85.00 |
| Master Landscape or Utility | \$ 85.00 |
| Master Landscape <u>and</u> Utility | \$110.00 |

Make checks payable to the "Treasurer, State of Maine."
Exam fees are non-refundable.

EXAM DATES

Exams often fill up weeks before the exam date. **Do not delay submitting your application.** When the test sessions fill up, names will be placed on a waiting list.

January 13, 2026
March 17, 2026
April 28, 2026
June 16, 2026
September 22, 2026
December 1, 2026

QUESTIONS?

Arborist Licensing Program (207)287-4515
www.maine.gov/php/arborist Debbie.Davis@maine.gov

ADMISSION TO THE EXAM

Only pre-registered candidates will be admitted to the exam. Walk-in applicants are not allowed. Examinations will not be scheduled until the Department receives both the exam application and fee.

The department will send an admission letter to each candidate scheduled for testing prior to the examination date. The letter will include the exam's specific date and time, and which exam category is scheduled.

All exams will be held at:
Deering Building, Room 101 - 90 Blossom Lane, Augusta

Exam no-show policy

If you cannot make your scheduled exam time, you must notify this office at least 48 hours before the examination date so we may accommodate people on the waiting list.

If you **do not attend the examination** and do not contact us, you will **forfeit the exam fee** and will only be scheduled for the next exam once all other candidates from the waiting list have been accommodated.

DESCRIPTION OF EXAMINATIONS

Exam sessions are 3 hours long and consist of a written and oral portion.

The written portion of the First-Class exams is open book, while the master exams are closed book for all parts. The written exams include true-or-false questions, multiple-choice questions, and tree identification.

Books are not permitted during the oral portion of the First-Class exams, which cover the safe use of arborist tools and equipment and approved arboricultural techniques.

The material covered in Utility and Landscape exams overlap. Candidates are strongly encouraged to take both exams at the same time.

EXAM PREPARATION TIPS

- Be familiar with the information in the Study Guide. Use the review questions in the Tree Climbers' Guide (included with the Study Guide)
- Purchase and practice using a tree identification book
- Practice knot-tying

GRADING INFORMATION

The minimum score required to pass the First-Class exams is 70%, and the minimum score required to pass the Master exams is 75%.

Your score is based on the number of questions you answer correctly. Be sure to mark an answer for each question. There is no penalty for guessing. Partial credit is given in the tree identification section.

Scores will be mailed within two weeks of the test date. All scores are mailed at the same time. Applicants receiving passing scores will be sent licensing information.

LICENSE ISSUANCE & FEES

Licenses will not be issued immediately after passing the exam. It could take several weeks before you are licensed to work. To receive your license, you must sign an insurance affidavit and pay a licensing fee. Your license will be issued only after receipt of the affidavit and payment.

License Fees:

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| First Class or Master Landscape OR Utility | \$30 |
| First Class or Master Landscape AND Utility | \$45 |

Licenses must be renewed annually. License Renewal Information will be sent by December 1 of each year. Renewal applications received after January 1 are subject to a late fee. Candidates who fail to renew a license for more than a year may need to re-take the Arborist License Exam to reinstate the license.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

The State of Maine has the authority to consider an applicant's criminal history record before issuing an occupational license. The Department will conduct random criminal history records checks before **issuing arborist licenses**.