

Take Action Against Albizia

If your property or a road is within the fall zone of an albizia tree, you need to take action to prevent damage and harm to persons and property. The fall zone is the height of the tree that becomes the radius of a circle once the tree falls.

House Bill 1713-CD1 was passed into law in July, 2009. It "Authorizes the governor to designate state-employees [in this case, State Civil Defense]...to enter on private property to mitigate hazardous situations after giving the landowner and/or occupier notice and a reasonable opportunity to mitigate the hazardous situation without assistance of the State. The State may seek recovery and reimbursement of costs and expenses...through direct payment or a lien against the property." (www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/2009/Bills/HB1713_SD1_HTML).

EASY AS ONE~TWO~THREE:

1. Write the property owner about the situation, include photos and the wording of the law, above, and ask him/her to let you know within 30 days if they will handle it themselves or authorize you or someone else to do it.
2. Send this letter Certified/Return Receipt and keep a copy for your records.
3. If there is no response, take your documentation to Civil Defense and ask them to address the hazard. Civil Defense phone number is 733-4300.

GOOD LUCK!

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HAZARDS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that conditions exist on
2 public and private property that pose a significant risk of harm
3 to the public. In the case of private property, a dangerous
4 condition may exist that poses a significant risk of harm to an
5 adjoining landowner. While the affected landowners may have
6 rights to personally address some conditions, there are
7 situations in which doing so may place the affected landowner in
8 a position of financial hardship or at risk of personal harm.
9 Where a dangerous condition exists and injury is caused as a
10 result, private property owners may seek remedies by way of
11 civil actions. However, the courts are not readily accessible
12 to all persons, especially those who do not have the economic
13 means to hire legal counsel.

14 The purpose of this Act is to allow designated state
15 employees, at the discretion of the governor, to enter private
16 property to mitigate hazardous situations such as dangerous
17 trees or branches that pose a falling hazard, unstable rock and
18 soil conditions, or clogged streams, after giving the landowner

1 notice and a reasonable opportunity to mitigate the hazardous
2 situation without assistance from the State.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 128, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§128- Civil defense powers; mitigation of hazardous
7 situations. (a) Even in the absence of a civil defense
8 activity or other emergency, the governor may authorize
9 designated state employees to enter private property at
10 reasonable times to mitigate situations deemed by the governor
11 to be hazardous to the health and safety of the public; provided
12 that this section shall be applicable only to the following
13 actions:

- 14 (1) Cutting, trimming, or removing dangerous trees or
15 branches that pose a hazard to other properties;
16 (2) Stabilizing or removing unstable rock and soil
17 hazards; or
18 (3) Cleaning streams and waterways to mitigate or prevent
19 flooding or other disasters;

20 provided further that at least ten days' notice shall be
21 provided to the landowner and to the occupier of the private
22 property of the governor's intention to authorize designated



1 state employees to enter the property to mitigate the hazardous
2 situation; provided further that the landowner or occupier shall
3 be given a reasonable opportunity to mitigate the hazardous
4 situation without assistance of the State before designated
5 state employees may enter the property.

6 (b) Written notice sent to the landowner's last known
7 address by certified mail, postage prepaid, return receipt
8 requested, shall be deemed sufficient notice. If land ownership
9 cannot be determined, notice shall be given once in a daily or
10 weekly publication of general circulation in the county where
11 any action or proposed action will be taken.

12 (c) If entry is refused, the governor may apply to the
13 district court in the circuit in which the property is located
14 for a warrant to enter the premises. The district court may
15 issue a warrant directing the chief of the appropriate county
16 police to assist the governor in gaining entry onto the premises
17 during regular working hours or at other reasonable times.

18 (d) The governor may seek recovery and reimbursement, by
19 appropriate proceedings, of all costs and expenses incurred in
20 the mitigation of a hazardous situation under this section, and
21 any costs and expenses imposed against any landowner shall be a
22 lien upon the landowner's property."



1 SECTION 3. Section 127-10, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended to read as follows:

3 "§127-10 Disaster relief during suspension of preceding
4 sections. During any period in which sections 127-1 to 127-9
5 are not in effect, the governor and political subdivisions may
6 exercise any and all of their powers under chapter 128 or that
7 relate to disasters resulting from enemy attacks, [~~in order~~] to
8 provide other disaster relief. All provisions of law that
9 relate to disasters resulting from enemy attacks during [~~such~~]
10 the period and all provisions of chapter 128 are made applicable
11 to other disaster relief, including without limitation,
12 provisions making or authorizing appropriations or expenditures.

13 As used in this section, "other disaster relief" means the
14 preparation for and the carrying out of all functions, other
15 than functions for which military forces are primarily
16 responsible, to minimize and repair injury and damage resulting
17 from disasters caused by fire, flood, tidal wave, volcanic
18 eruption, earthquake, or other natural causes and major
19 disasters caused by acts of man[~~]~~ including [~~but not limited~~
20 ~~to~~] massive oil spills, nuclear accidents, airplane crashes,
21 and civil disturbances."



1 SECTION 4. Act 78, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, is amended
2 by amending section 6 to read as follows:

3 "SECTION 6. Any provision of the Act to the contrary
4 notwithstanding, the appropriations under this Act shall not
5 lapse at the end of the fiscal year for which the appropriations
6 were made. All unexpended and unencumbered balances of the
7 appropriations made in this Act as of the close of business on
8 June 30, [~~2009~~] 2010, shall lapse.

9 Should any projects paid for by state funds under this Act
10 later become eligible for federal reimbursement, the federal
11 reimbursement funds shall be deposited in the emergency and
12 budget reserve fund; provided that moneys expended by
13 departments and agencies of the [~~state~~] State or counties for
14 projects under this Act that later become eligible for federal
15 reimbursements shall be reimbursed to the department or agency."

16 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
17 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

18 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2009;
19 provided that section 4 of this Act shall take effect on
20 June 30, 2009.



Report Title:

Hazard Mitigation; Private Property

Description:

Authorizes the governor to designate state employees, when no emergency exists, to enter on private property to mitigate hazardous situations after giving the landowner and occupier notice and a reasonable opportunity to mitigate the hazardous situation without assistance of the State. May seek recovery and reimbursement of costs and expenses. Extends sunset date for Act 78, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, until June 30, 2010.
(HB1713 CD1)

