Drainage Change Tree Checklist

Protecting root zones before and after a paving or grading project

Before construction begins

1. **Map where water currently goes**
   Walk the site after a heavy rain and note where water pools and where it drains away before any work starts.
2. **Share the tree's location with your contractor**
   Point out mature trees so the drainage design can route runoff away from their root zones.
3. **Ask about grading direction near the canopy**
   Confirm which way the finished grade will slope relative to nearby trees.

During the project

1. **Keep equipment and materials off the root zone**
   Staging heavy materials over roots adds compaction on top of any drainage change.
2. **Watch for standing water after rain events**
   Note any new pooling near trees while construction is still in progress.
3. **Photograph the canopy periodically**
   A dated record makes it easier to notice gradual changes later.

After construction wraps up

1. **Recheck drainage after the first heavy rain**
   Compare the new pattern to your baseline notes from before the project.
2. **Watch the canopy over the following seasons**
   Uneven thinning or dieback starting near the changed area is the pattern worth tracking.
3. **Ask a certified arborist for a follow-up look**
   A root zone evaluation a season after construction can catch a developing problem early.

Map it before, watch it during, and check back after construction ends.

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