

Tree Removal Permit Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Tree Removal?

A: Tree Removal is cutting down a tree or removing more than 50% of a tree.

Q: What is a Tree Removal Permit?

A: A Tree Removal Permit is a written authorization from the City of Ashland to remove a tree located on private property. A Tree Removal Permit is a planning application processed through the Community Development Department and requires public notice to surrounding properties. The application fee for a Tree Removal Permit is \$28.

Q: When is a Tree Removal Permit required?

A: The size and location of a tree are the main factors that determine whether a Tree Removal Permit is required. The size of the tree is measured as diameter at breast height (DBH). DBH is the diameter of the trunk measured 4 ½ feet above the ground from the base of the trunk. The location of the tree includes the zoning designation of the property (e.g., residential, commercial), the physical characteristics of the property (e.g., hillside areas, creeks, wetlands), and in some cases, whether the property is vacant or developed.

The following situations require a Tree Removal Permit.

- Removal of a tree that is 18-inches DBH or greater and located on vacant property in the single-family residential zones (R-1, RR, WR and NM zones).
- Removal of a tree that is greater than six-inches DBH and located in the multi-family, commercial and employment zones (R-1-3.5, R-2, R-3, C-1, E-1, M-1, CM or HC).
- Removal of a tree located on steep slopes (25% and greater) or in an area surrounding creeks and wetlands.
- Removal of a tree that is identified to be preserved and protected in a previous planning application decision, such as part of the creation of a subdivision or constructing an accessory residential unit.
- Removal of a tree located in the public street right-of-way (see Street Tree Removal Permit handout).
- The topping of a tree.

Q: What is Tree Topping?

A: Tree Topping is the severe cutting back of a tree's limbs to stubs three inches or larger in diameter within the tree's crown to remove the natural canopy and disfigure the tree (e.g., topping a tree to avoid utility wires).

Q: Does all tree removals require a permit from the City of Ashland?

A: No. The following tree removal activities that are exempt and do not require a Tree Removal Permit.

- Removal of trees in single-family and multi-family residential zones (RR, WR, R-1, NM, R-1-3.5, R-2 and R-3) on lots occupied only by a single family detached dwelling and associated accessory structures (e.g., garages, sheds). This exemption does not apply if the tree is located on steep slopes, adjacent to creeks or wetlands, or is protected by a previous planning application decision.
- Removal of trees less than six-inches DBH in any zone, excluding trees located in the public street right-of-way, or required as landscape improvements as part of a planning application.
- Removal of trees with the Wildfire Lands area of the City of Ashland for the purpose of wildfire fuel management. This exemption does not apply if the tree is located on steep slopes, adjacent to creeks or wetlands, or is protected by a previous planning application decision.
- Removal of dead trees. A dead tree is defined as a tree that is lifeless as indicated by evidence such as unseasonable lack of foliage, brittle dry branches or lack of growth during the growing season.

Q: What conditions are needed for a Tree Removal Permit to be approved?

A: The Tree Removal Permit may be approved by the City for one or more of the following conditions.

- Emergency situations where a tree is in immediate danger of collapse and presents a clear danger to persons or property. A wind or snow storm that results in the main trunk of a tree breaking off or a tree leaning and the soil heaving at the base of the tree is a common example of an emergency situation.
- The condition or location of a tree will create a public safety hazard in the future (i.e., Hazard Tree) and the hazard cannot be alleviated by treatment, pruning or relocation.
- The property is being developed and the tree is proposed for removal in order to meet the City of Ashland's development standards. Common reasons for removing trees as part of a development proposal include that a tree is located within a proposed building location, within a proposed street, driveway or parking area, or the tree is in close proximity to buildings or construction areas.

Q: What is considered a "Hazard Tree"?

A: A hazard tree is a tree that is physically damaged to the degree that it is clear the tree is likely to fall and injure persons or property. A hazard tree may also include a tree that is located within a public right of way and is causing damage to existing public or private facilities or services and such facilities or services cannot be relocated.

Q: Am I required to replace a tree once I remove it?

A: Yes, except when trees are removed because they are determined to be diseased, dead or a hazard.

Q: What do I need to include in my application for a Tree Removal Permit?

- A site plan that shows the number, size, species and location of the trees proposed to be removed.
- A statement of the reason for removal or topping and the anticipated date of removal or topping.
- Information concerning the planting of new trees to replace the trees being removed.
- The City may require an arborist's report demonstrating that there is an emergency situation, that a tree is a hazard or otherwise meets the criteria for removal.

See AMC 18.5.6.030 for the complete Tree Removal Permit requirements.

Q: How long is a Tree Removal Permit valid?

A: Once approved, a Tree Removal Permit is valid for 18 months. A 30-day extension is automatically granted by the City if requested in writing before the expiration of the permit.

Please refer to section 18.5.7 of the Ashland Municipal Code (AMC) for more details on Tree Removal Permit requirements (<http://www.ashland.or.us/code.asp>). Other AMC sections that apply to tree removal activities follow.

- Chapter 18.3.10 Physical and Environmental Constraints Overlay
- Chapter 18.3.11 Water Resources Protection Zones (Overlays)
- Chapter 18.4.5 Tree Preservation and Protection
- AMC 13.16 Street Trees

Note: This handout provides general information. For details regarding your specific property and the applicable requirements, we recommend that you speak with the City of Ashland Planning Division. A planner is available for questions on Monday – Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Community Development and Engineering Building located at 51 Winburn Way, across from Lithia Park. The Planning Division can also be reached at (541) 488-5305 or planning@ashland.or.us.