



Tree Removal Permit Process and Regulations

Tree Removal Permits are governed by §6.10 and §4.5.9.D of the *Zoning Ordinance*

| Frequently Asked Questions | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------|-----------------------|----------|-----|--------------------|-----|----------------|-----|---|-----|
| <p>Q: Do I need a tree removal permit to cut down a tree on my lot?</p> | <p>A: Ask yourself,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the tree in a Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Area (RPA)*? Is the tree on a lot $\geq \frac{1}{2}$ acre <u>AND</u> in the RL, RM, or RH Zoning district#? Is the tree on a lot in the PD-R, RT-6, RT, RMF, PD-M, PD-C, PD-I, CL, CO, CR, CG, IL, or IH Zoning districts#? Is the tree ≥ 5" in caliper (DBH)? <p>If the answer to any of the above questions is 'YES', a tree removal permit is required.</p> <p>* <i>No vegetation may be disturbed in the RPA. The general location of RPAs can be found on the City's RPA Map, available online or at City Hall.</i></p> <p># <i>To determine your Zoning district you can refer to the City's Zoning Map, available online or at City Hall.</i></p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Q: What should I do if my neighbor is cutting down a tree without a permit?</p> | <p>A: You can contact the Zoning office with the address of the property (703-385-7820).</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Q: Can I cut down a tree that is on the property line between my lot and my neighbor's lot?</p> | <p>A: Maybe. If the base of a tree is partially on an adjacent property, you will be asked to obtain written approval from that neighbor.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Q: Do I need HOA approval to remove a tree?</p> | <p>A: Probably. Prior to submitting anything to the City, consult with your HOA to determine their requirements. The City will notify the HOA when a Tree Removal Permit application is received.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Q: Can I trim a tree without a permit?</p> | <p>A: Yes, provided the portion of the tree being trimmed is on your lot and the work is performed from your property. Tree trimming should be carried out so as not to cause injury to the tree.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Q: Do I have to replant a tree that has been removed?</p> | <p>A: Maybe. In addition to maintaining the minimum tree canopy, some lots and developments are required to maintain trees installed as part of an approved site plan. Review staff will determine if the tree needs to be replaced.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Q: What is 'required tree canopy/cover'?</p> | <p>A: The minimum required tree canopy is the area of a lot that must be covered by the canopy of trees, as percentage of the total lot area. The required percentages are based on zoning district, as follows:</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Zoning District</u></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Minimum Canopy</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RL</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RM, RH, PD-R</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RT-6, RT</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RMF, PD-M, PD-C, PD-I, CL, CO, CR, CG, IL, IH</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | <u>Zoning District</u> | <u>Minimum Canopy</u> | RL | 25% | RM, RH, PD-R | 20% | RT-6, RT | 15% | RMF, PD-M, PD-C, PD-I, CL, CO, CR, CG, IL, IH | 10% |
| <u>Zoning District</u> | <u>Minimum Canopy</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| RL | 25% | | | | | | | | | | |
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| RMF, PD-M, PD-C, PD-I, CL, CO, CR, CG, IL, IH | 10% | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Q: Does the City provide an arborist?</p> | <p>A: No, the City does not offer arborist services.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |

The City of Fairfax is committed to the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request a reasonable accommodation for any type of disability, please call 703-385-7930, (TTY 711)

Tree Removal Permit Application Process

Before removing any trees, submit a complete application package, including:

- Tree Removal Permit Application
([available online](#) or at City Hall)
- Permit Application Fee:
- Individual Residential:.....\$20.00
- All other Lots:.....\$75.00
- A plan, aerial map, or survey showing the location of tree(s) to be removed
- Photographs of tree(s)
- An arborist's report (if available)

After submitting, you may be contacted by review staff for additional information. Staff may also perform an inspection of the tree(s) on the property, as required.

Once review is complete, you will either be issued a permit via email, or you will be notified of the disapproval of your application. If the permit is issued, review all conditions of approval, and keep a copy on site during removal.

You have 120 days to install replacement tree(s), per any conditions placed on the permit. You may provide evidence of installation once the tree(s) are installed (e.g. photos, receipt for installed trees, etc.).

Review Criteria

Before issuing a Tree Removal Permit, the City may consider the following criteria upon receipt of a complete application:

- The overall tree canopy, before and after the proposed removal.
- The condition of the tree(s) with respect to its health, imminent danger of falling, distance to existing structures, and interference with infrastructure.
- The number of species, size, and location of other protected trees in the area and the effect of the removal as it pertains to shade, privacy between properties, and scenic beauty of the area.
- The City may authorize removal if the tree(s) is unreasonably adversely impacting the use of the property. Mitigation may be required.
- Any potential visual impacts near public streets may require a review by the Board of Architectural Review.