

Tree Removal Permitting Guide



The City of Kirkland has a goal of improving tree canopy coverage. To address this goal, Kirkland Zoning Code regulates tree removals and requires permitting and replacement of removed trees.

Kirklandwa.gov/Trees

Measuring Your Tree

Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)

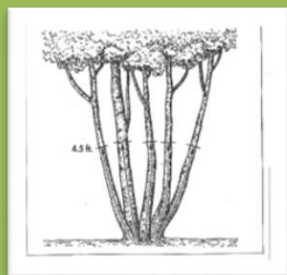
DBH is the standard measurement of tree size and is measured 54 inches (4.5 feet) above the ground.

How to measure your tree:

1. Wrap a soft measuring tape around the tree trunk at 54 inches above the ground to find the circumference. For trees with multiple trunks at 4.5 feet height, only trunks 3" DBH or greater should be included in your measurement (about the size of a soup can).

2. Calculate the diameter using an online calculator or by dividing the circumference by 3.14 (pi). **Example:** Circumference measures 100"/3.14 = 31.8" DBH tree.

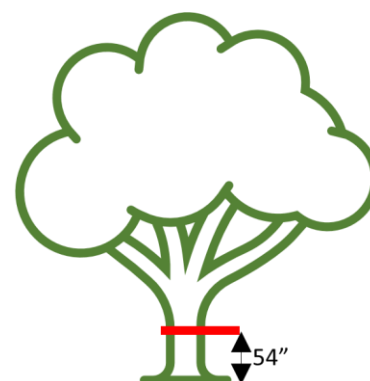
3. When a tree splits into several trunks, the DBH for the tree is the square root ($\sqrt{\quad}$) of the sum of the DBH for each individual stem squared. **Example:** DBH = square root [(stem 1)² + (stem2)²]



What is a Regulated Tree?

6" diameter (DBH)
or more is a
Regulated Tree

26" diameter (DBH)
or more is a
Landmark Tree



Frequently Asked Questions

Pruning does not require a permit when:

- Less than 25% of the tree's live branches are removed
- The pruning does not involve topping (which is prohibited)
- The tree is not located in a public right-of-way, Critical Area, NGPE, or Grove Covenant

Dead/dying or imminent hazard trees may not require a permit when:

- You provide photographs and/or an Arborist report clearly illustrating the decline or threat

Finding an Arborist

When submitting a tree removal permit to the City for Hazard/Nuisance trees, including trees on public property, the applicant must hire a Qualified Professional Arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). For hazard trees, the Qualified Professional Arborist must have current TRAQ (Tree Risk Assessment Qualification) credentials.

If you're unsure about an arborist's credentials, you can verify them through the ISA database using the [Find an Arborist Tool](#).

What Type of Tree Removal Permit Do You Need?

Private Tree Removal Notification

- You have a Regulated Tree located on private property
- The tree is not a Landmark Tree
- There are no special conditions (see list below)
- You have not exceeded the tree removal allowances for the lot

See the [Private Tree Removal Notification Instruction Guide](#) for more information

Private Tree Removal Permit

- You have a Regulated or Landmark Tree located on private property
- The tree is a hazard or nuisance, as verified by your Arborist
- The hazard or nuisance cannot be corrected through reasonable practices

See the [Private Tree Removal Permit Instruction Guide](#) and [Landmark Tree Removal Guide](#) for more information

Public Tree Pruning or Removal Permit

- The tree is located on public property
- The tree is a hazard or nuisance, as verified by your Arborist
- The hazard or nuisance cannot be corrected through reasonable practices

See the [Public Tree Pruning or Removal Permit Instruction Guide](#) for more information

Forest Stewardship Plan Permit

- Your lot is at least 25,000 square feet
- The lot is significantly wooded (>40% canopy cover)
- You want to remove more than the tree removal allowances for the property size

See the [Forest Stewardship Plan Permit Instruction Guide](#) for more information

Conditions that Require a Tree Removal Permit

To remove trees under these conditions a Private Tree Removal Permit is required, and the tree must be a hazard or nuisance.

Removal(s) exceed allowances based on property size or less than the minimum number of trees required to remain	Located within a wetland, stream, or associated buffers	Required to be retained, planted, or preserved from previous development in the past 5 years
Proposal to remove a Hedge	Located in a Landslide Hazard Area	
Protected under a voluntary Tree Preservation Covenant	Located in the Holmes Point Overlay (HPO)	Required to be retained or planted as required landscaping (typically multi-family/commercial properties)
Located in a Shoreline setback	Located in a protected Grove Covenant	

REQUIRED TREE REPLACEMENT FOR TREE PERMITS

6 to 15" DBH	1:1 replacement
16 to 26" DBH	2:1 replacement
26" DBH or greater (Landmark)	3:1 replacement
See Approved Landmark Tree Mitigation List	

Additional mitigation standards apply to trees located on sites with conditions. See KZC 95.25(8)