

Q. Do I need a permit to trim or remove a tree if it's on my private property?

- A. No permits are required to trim or remove a tree that is located on private property, but there are two exceptions:
1. The removal of Protected Trees require a permit called a Certificate of Approval. (See question below on Protected Trees).
 2. The removal of trees that were planted as part of a City-approved landscape plan requires an approval called a Zoning Compliance Determination. To allow removal of trees planted as part of a previously-approved plan, an applicant must provide a new planting plan that is consistent with the landscape design standards of the original plan. This situation typically applies to properties that belong to a homeowners association or a planned development. Please contact Planning at (510) 747-6805 for more information.

Q. Do I need a permit to remove or prune a street tree in front of my home or business?

A. The City is responsible for trees and surface roots growing in the public right of way. The Public Works Department will trim or remove any City tree or shrub that might affect the streets, sidewalks or sewers. Contact the Public Works Maintenance Division at (510) 747-7900 for maintenance service.

Q. What type of trees are classified as Protected Trees in Alameda?

A. The following trees are protected in Alameda. Removal of a protected tree requires a Certificate of Approval. Consult a certified arborist if you need assistance identifying a tree on private property.

1. All coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) in Alameda with a ten inch (10") or greater diameter measured four and a half feet (4.5') above ground.
2. All Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) and California fan palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) in the public rights of way on both sides of Burbank Street, Portola Avenue, and Eighth Street between Central and Portola Avenues.
3. All trees in the three median islands on Thompson Avenue between High Street and Fernside Boulevard, known as Christmas Tree Lane. First island: Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*); Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*). Second island: Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*); Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*); Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*). Third island: Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*); Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*); Jellicote Pine (*Pinus patula*); Bradford Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*).
4. All sycamore (London plane trees) (*Platanus acerifolia*) in the public rights of way on both sides of Central Avenue between Fernside Boulevard and 5th Street.

Q. What are the requirements to obtain a Certificate of Approval to remove an oak tree?

- A. The application requires the following submittals:
1. Completed Planning Permit Application form
 2. Plot plan drawing identifying the location of the tree with respect to buildings and property lines
 3. A report prepared by a ISA Certified Arborist where the health of the tree is the reason for removal, OR
 4. A report prepared by a Licensed Contractor where damage to foundation or structures is the reason for removal.
 5. Application fees.

Q. How long does it take to obtain a Certificate of Approval to remove an oak tree?

A. The Certificate of Approval process for oak trees requires the City to notify property owners within 300' of the premises and provide a 10-day public comment period. From application submittal to approval, the process could take at least 30 days.

Q. What if the tree removal is an emergency?

A. If the tree removal is an emergency (where there is clear evidence demanding immediate action to prevent loss of life, health or property), the City Building Official may grant immediate approval of the tree removal. These determinations are uncommon and must be supported by clear visual evidence that the tree is posing an imminent hazard to persons or property in the immediate vicinity. Even if the Building Official approves of an emergency removal, the applicant is still required to submit an application for a Certificate of Approval and satisfy tree replacement requirements.

Q. Are there requirements to replace protected trees once I have approval to remove them?

A. Yes, any coast live oak that is removed must be replaced with a minimum of two (2) oak trees of a ten (10) gallon size or larger. An applicant may choose to purchase the trees from any plant nursery and plant them onsite to satisfy this requirement. Alternatively, applicants may choose to pay an in-lieu fee if physical conditions on the property prohibit installation of replacement trees. The fee is used to purchase trees to be planted in public spaces in the City of Alameda.

Q. Am I responsible for trees, plants, or shrubs that extend from my property into sidewalks and streets?

A. It is the responsibility of the property owner for maintaining trees, plants, and shrubs that originate on their property. Property owners are also required to keep them from encroaching into the public right-of-way, from impeding traffic, or from obscuring traffic control devices.

Q. What if my neighbor's tree is overhanging onto my property and/or causing damage or dropping leaves/branches onto my property?

A. Unfortunately, this is a civil matter between two property owners. The City cannot get involved in private property issues between neighbors. You may consult with your homeowner's insurance agent or a private attorney for any liability concerns.

Q. My neighbor is cutting down a tree, who should I call?

A. If the tree in question is one that requires City review, please contact the Code Enforcement Division at (510) 747-6817 to report the violation.