

## May I remove trees from my property?

Yes, if: (1) There are no restrictions on your property. Generally, you can remove several trees without a permit. Tree removal that results in over 1,000 square feet of disturbance of the ground requires a clearing & grading permit. (2) Your property is NOT located in an R-1 zone in the Bridle Trails Subarea. (3) You are not proposing development that adds 20% additional impervious surface on your lot. Prior to removal of any trees you should contact the Land Use desk to ensure compliance with applicable codes.

## What restrictions may prevent me from removing any trees I want from my property?

Generally, a decision about tree removal is yours to make. However, there can be restrictions for designated trees to remain, regardless of the amount of disturbance of the ground. If you are considering removing trees on your property, please check the following:

*Plat/PUD Restrictions:* Does your subdivision or Planned Unit Development (PUD) have restrictions which prohibit tree removal? For example, does the plat or PUD document contain Native Growth Protection Areas (NGPAs), Retained Vegetation Areas (RVAs), or a Tree Retention Plan?

*Critical Areas:* Does your property contain a critical area (steep slope, stream corridor, wetland, etc.) or is one located adjacent to or near your property? If you are unsure, a land use planner can assist you in making this determination through the Land Use desk in Development Services.

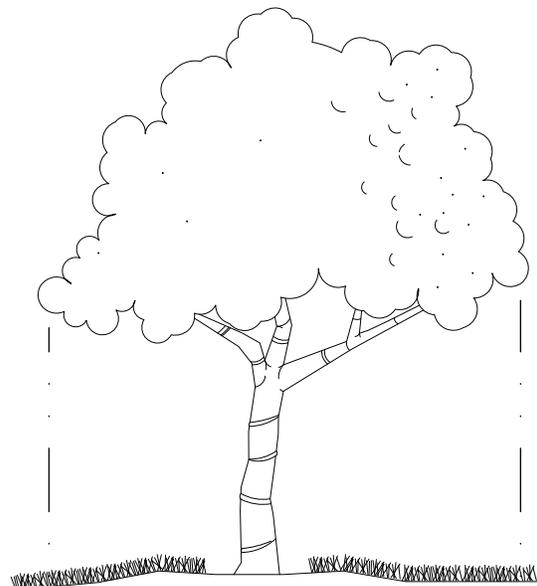
*Private Agreements:* Is your property subject to private contracts, covenants, or homeowner associations that might affect your ability to remove trees? Please note that the city does not enforce such private restrictions. If your property is located within a Bridle Trails R-1 zoning

district, refer to Handout 27a for tree removal restrictions.

Any vegetation removal, including trees, is prohibited within the above areas. In some cases, if trees are diseased or dying and are deemed hazardous by a certified arborist, they can be removed if a permit is obtained from the Land Use desk in Development Services. In such cases, the city will require replanting or other mitigation in place of the removed trees. Always check with a land use planner for needed permits and approvals prior to trimming, pruning, or removing trees within the areas listed above.

## May I remove trees located within the city right of way?

Removal of trees within the city right of way may require a right of way use permit. Contact Transportation's Right of Way Division, 425-452-4189, for further information.



**Tree Canopy Area**  
elevation view

## **Are there other tree retention requirements?**

For new single-family structures or additions that result in 20% increase in impervious surface on a lot developed with a residential use, you must retain a minimum of 30 percent of the diameter inches of significant trees existing in the site area. The 30 percent retention rule is also applicable to new short plats and subdivisions.

A significant tree is any healthy tree 8" or greater in diameter, measured 4 feet above existing grade.

## **What is disturbance of the ground?**

Disturbance of the ground results from any action that displaces or destroys vegetation, resulting in increased exposure of the underlying soils. This can include exposure of the existing ground due to removal of tree canopy where no other vegetation is growing under the tree. Disturbance can also result from the physical process of tree removal, where foot and vehicle traffic, construction of access roads, felling of trees, dragging of felled trees, and excavation of stumps disturb the ground.

## **How do I know if the tree I want to remove will result in disturbance of the ground of less than 1,000 square feet?**

For most single-family lots with a house, tree removal is done by hand or by using a crane. In these cases, disturbance would be minimal and can be estimated at 50 square feet of disturbance for each living evergreen or deciduous tree, eight inches or greater in diameter measured four feet above existing grade.

For larger and/or less developed areas, estimates of disturbance must be made on the anticipated amount of disturbance due to equipment access, tree felling, and dragging or skidding of trees.

## **What if I want to remove more than one tree?**

For most developed single-family lots, you would determine the number of trees to be removed and multiply by 50 square feet. If the total does not exceed 1,000 square feet, a permit is not required. For larger or less developed lots, total disturbance must be estimated based on the expected number of trees to be removed, foot and vehicle traffic, construction of access, and felling and dragging of trees.

## **What if the tree removal will result in more than 1,000 square feet of disturbance of the ground?**

A clearing & grading permit is required. Depending on the amount of tree removal proposed, site conditions such as critical areas, and other factors, the city might impose special conditions on the permit to minimize risk of damage to your site, surrounding properties, or the environment.

## **Can someone help me estimate how much disturbance of the ground will result from my tree removal?**

The city's clearing & grading staff can help you with these estimates and with other questions related to tree removal. They can be reached at 425-452-2019.

## **Where can I get more information?**

- BCC 23.76, Clearing and Grading Code
- LUC 20.25H, Critical Areas Overlay District
- LUC 20.20.900, Tree Retention

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This document is intended to provide guidance in applying certain Land Use Code regulations and is for informational use only. It cannot be used as a substitute for the Land Use Code or for other city codes, such as the Construction Codes. Additional information is available from Development Services at Bellevue City Hall or on the city website at [www.bellevuewa.gov](http://www.bellevuewa.gov).

For land use regulations that may apply to your project, contact the Land Use Information Desk in Development Services. Phone: 425-452-4188. E-mail: [landusereview@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:landusereview@bellevuewa.gov). Assistance for the hearing impaired: dial 711.

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