



Trees – Frequently Asked Questions

Questions about this FAQ: 604-990-2480, environment@dnv.org

1. What is the definition of a tree?

Tree means a long-lived woody perennial plant having one or more stems, with the capacity to grow to a considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground with at least one stem having a diameter of 5 centimetres or more measured at DBH or having a height of 2 metres as measured from the natural grade on the uphill side of the tree.

2. Do I need a permit to remove or prune trees on my private property?

If the tree(s) in question are classified as a “large diameter tree” or a “protected tree”, then a permit is required for both removal and pruning. Summary definitions for “large diameter tree” and “protected tree” are found below. For more detailed definitions, see the [Tree Protection Bylaw 7671](#).

Large Diameter Tree

- Trees equal or greater than 75cm, 30”, or 2.5’ in diameter, measuring from 1.3 metres above ground level (see [Tree Measurement Guide](#))

Protected Tree

- Any tree located on, or straddling, land owned or in possession of the District, including a tree in a park, road, boulevard, or lane allowance;
- Any tree located within a protected area that is, a tree within:
 - 15m of the top of bank (TOB) of a watercourse);
 - 10m of TOB of a ravine greater than 60m in width; or
 - 30m of TOB for lots greater than 0.5 hectares adjacent to the Capilano River, Lynn Creek, Seymour River, and Mackay Creek;
- Any tree located on a slope greater than 36%;
- Any replacement tree that has been planted as a replacement for a tree that has been cut, removed, or damaged, or a tree planted as a condition of subdivision or other municipal approval;
- Any tree that is covenanted – Title searches may be obtained (for a fee) from the Land Title Office;

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- Any designated heritage trees – Heritage trees are listed in Schedule A of the [Tree Protection Bylaw 7671](#);
- Any wildlife tree that is standing dead or alive and has special characteristics that provide valuable habitat in accordance with criteria contained in the *Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessor’s Course Workbook – Parks and Recreation Sites*;
- Any tree that is 250 years old or older;
- Any tree located on wetland or 30m from the waterfront;
- Any tree located in the following District Development Permit Areas:
 - Protection of Natural Environment;
 - Streamside Protection; and
 - Slope Hazard; and
- Any tree of the following species:
 - *Arbutus (Arbutus menziesii)*;
 - Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*);
 - Oregon ash (*Fraxinus spp.*);
 - Pacific yew (*Taxus brevifolia*);
 - Western white pine (*Pinus monticola*); or
 - Yellow cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*).

3. When can I remove or prune a tree *without* a tree permit?

You do not need a tree permit to remove or prune a tree if the tree is not defined as a “large diameter tree” or “protected tree” as outlined in #2 above.

4. What do I need to submit for a tree permit?

Required documentation depends on the proposed work as well as whether the tree is a “large diameter tree” or “protected tree” (see Question #2 for definitions). The table below shows what documentation is required when submitting a tree permit:

Desired Action	Required Documentation
Prune a large diameter or protected tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree permit application • Arborist report
Remove a hazardous protected tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree permit application • Arborist report
Remove a large diameter tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree permit application
Remove a protected tree	Contact us at environment@dnv.org for a list of the required documents

5. What is an arborist?

An arborist means an arborist who is certified by and in good standing with the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). You can verify an arborist's ISA credential by using the "Verify a Credential" tool on the ISA website.

6. What is an arborist report?

A detailed report about the tree(s) to be worked on that outlines the location, species, diameter at breast height (DBH), height, condition, why the work needs to be completed, and any recommendations made by the certified arborist. Please refer to [Master Requirement ENV 118](#) for a detailed list of report requirements.

7. When do I need an arborist report?

An arborist report is required when pruning a large diameter or protected tree, and when applying to remove a protected tree. An arborist report is also required if the applicant wishes to remove a hazardous tree and wants to qualify for a no fee and no replanting permit. See Question #21 for more information on hazard trees.

8. When is the "bird nesting window" and what does this mean?

The bird nesting window is a generalized period of time when bird nesting activity is predicted to occur (e.g. egg laying, incubation, and fledging). The provincial *Wildlife Act* and the federal *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* dictates that no harm shall come to a bird, its nest, or its eggs. It is up to the applicant to make sure that no bird and its habitat is harmed during tree removal. A Registered Professional Biologist can undertake a nesting survey prior to tree removal or land clearance, if required. A nesting survey is required for any work on District owned trees.

9. Is there a height restriction on trees in the District of North Vancouver?

No, the District does not have a bylaw restricting the height of trees in the District of North Vancouver.

10. Can I top my trees?

Tree topping is not permitted when trees have not previously been topped. Topping is not a recommended practice as it can affect the long-term physiological and structural health of a tree. Re-topping of previously topped trees may be considered under the recommendation of an ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) Certified Arborist, which should be noted in the arborist report submitted with the tree permit application.

11. Can I work on a District tree without a permit?

No. A formal request is made and forwarded to the appropriate Field Arborist in the District Parks Department who will inspect and process as required. Requests can be made through the District's [Report a Problem](#) website.

12. If the tree is on District of North Vancouver property, do I need authorization from the neighbours?

A Field Arborist in the District Parks Department will determine whether neighbour authorization is required. Any requirements will be communicated to the applicant.

13. My neighbour has a tree that is encroaching on my property and I would like them to trim it back. Can you make them maintain their tree?

No. This is a private matter between you and your neighbour. The District does not have a mandate to get involved. As a general rule, you may trim the tree back to your property line, as long as it does not have a detrimental effect on the long-term health or stability of the tree, and the work should be done by a certified arborist. If the tree is classified as a “large diameter” or “protected” tree (see Question #2 for definitions), then a tree permit is required.

14. How do I know if the tree is on my private property or District property?

A legal survey prepared by a registered BC Land Surveyor outlines which trees are on your lot and which are on District property.

15. What if the tree is half on my property and half on District and/or private property?

The tree has joint ownership and consent from all parties has to be given before work can be carried out on the tree. If the tree is shared with the District, a tree permit will need to be issued. A tree is considered shared with the District if more than 25% of the trunk is located on District land.

16. Do I need to replant trees after I remove a tree? How many?

Replanting is required when a tree permit is issued and if the lot in question will have less than 20% canopy coverage remaining after removing the large diameter tree. The criteria for replanting is as follows:

- If the lot is less than 420 square metres in area, the applicant must plant one replacement tree for each tree removed; or
- If the lot is greater than 420 square metres in area, the applicant must plant three replacement trees for each tree removed.

A security deposit will need to be paid prior to issuance of the tree permit. Once the replanted trees are installed and inspected by District staff, your security deposit will be returned back to you.

17. I now have a tree permit to remove a large diameter tree. Why do I have to replant trees on my own lot?

Replanting is required to maintain the District's forested character and to compensate for the loss of the significant ecological services provided to the community by the removal of a mature large diameter tree. Compensatory planting of new trees is an essential element in our tree permit process. Net benefits such as carbon sequestration, reducing water/air pollutants, stormwater management, wildlife habitat, shade/shelter, etc. are all detrimentally affected over time if we do not maintain a healthy level of tree canopy on private land within our community.

18. Can I plant replacement trees somewhere other than my lot?

No. Unless staff make a determination that it is appropriate to do so given the specific site conditions and rationale.

19. What happens if I don't want to plant any replacement trees?

A rationale why the tree(s) cannot be feasibly planted within the lot should be discussed and agreed upon with District staff. The District will then keep your security deposit and plant replacement tree(s) elsewhere in the District. Forfeiture of the security deposit is only possible with the removal of large diameter trees. Replanting must be completed if a protected tree is removed and replanting conditions are attached to the permit.

20. Are the replacement trees I plant protected?

Yes. Replacement trees are defined as "protected trees" in the [Tree Protection Bylaw 7671](#), including those planted as a condition of the removal of a "large diameter tree" (see Question #2 for definitions). Details and photographs of the tree(s) are taken by staff during their site inspection for the release of the tree restitution security deposit. A follow up inspection may be undertaken or required to ensure that the trees have survived and have not been removed or moved from their planting location. If it is found that the trees have died or have been removed without written consent from the District, new trees of the same species and size originally specified will need to be planted.

21. I have a hazardous tree on my property. Can I remove it right now?

If the tree is an obvious hazard, a photo of the tree can be sent to environment@dnv.org. If staff determine that the tree is not obviously a hazard or hazardous, it must be inspected

by an ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) Certified Tree Risk Assessor to be declared as a hazardous tree. The District will review the information provided by the arborist and if in agreement, issue a permit with no fee to remove this tree. In the event that a tree is in a state of “failure in progress”, where emergency response action is required to mitigate an immediate threat to persons and property, the failed portion of the tree is to be retained on site for staff inspection. A report by the attending arborist with detailed photographic evidence will be required within 48 hours of the incident.

22. Do I have to provide a security deposit? If so, how do I get my security back?

The District may require an applicant to provide a security deposit to guarantee that replanting has been completed. We will hold this money until such a time as the works are completed to the satisfaction of the District. The applicant can then request a refund of the security deposit and the District will mail a cheque for any unused portion (plus interest).

23. I would like to make an offer on a property, but I am concerned that I cannot remove trees to either expand the backyard for children or for the purpose of rebuilding or expanding the house. How do I work around these trees?

It is recommended that a Certified ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) Arborist is engaged at the earliest opportunity to review the tree resources within and adjacent to the property and make recommendations. However, where time constraints do not allow a detailed review and the protected status of the trees is still unknown, it is recommended that the potential purchaser consider the trees as “protected trees” (see Question #2 for definition) and is aware that a future application to remove them may be rejected and/or a proposed development may have to be carefully designed to retain them.