

# TREE PERMITS - CRITICAL AREAS & SHORELINE

City of Tukwila - Permit Center  
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[www.tukwilawa.gov/departments/  
permit-center/](http://www.tukwilawa.gov/departments/permit-center/)



Permit Type: Tree Permit  
Permit Subtype: - Critical Area  
- Shoreline

## ABOUT CRITICAL AREA & SHORELINE TREE PERMITS

A **Critical Areas Tree Permit** is required for tree removal or removing within environmentally critical areas such as wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, and their buffers. It also covers the removal of non-invasive plants within these critical areas to ensure proper ecological management while preventing erosion and habitat disruption.

A **Shoreline Tree Permit** is needed for tree work within designated shoreline zones, ensuring compliance with regulations that protect water quality, habitat, and scenic views. These permits help preserve the environmental integrity of waterfront areas.

### Applicable Regulations:

- [Tukwila Title 18 – Zoning](#)

### Resources:

- [City Maps](#)

## SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST

A PDF of each document is required at time of submittal. Please label files as listed below:

CHECKLIST	FILE NAME	DESCRIPTION
DOCUMENTS		
	<b>Affidavit</b>	Completed and notarized ' <a href="#">Affidavit of Ownership and Hold Harmless Permission to Enter Property</a> '.
	<b>Criteria Response</b>	Detailed demonstration that the application meets all applicable criteria outlined in the code for the proposal.
PLAN SETS		
	<b>Plan Set</b>	Refer to the <a href="#">Land Use Application Plan Set Guide</a> for preparing plans.

# TREE PERMIT – CRITICAL AREAS & SHORELINE

## CRITICAL AREA TREE PERMITS (TMC 18.45)

### Permit Requirements

A Type 2 Critical Area Tree Removal and Vegetation Clearing Permit is required before any tree removal or site clearing unless the work is part of an approved Special Permission permit for interrupted buffers, buffer averaging, or other critical area deviations.

### Criteria for Tree Removal in a Critical Area or Buffer

A Critical Area Tree Removal and Vegetation Clearing Permit application shall only be approved if the proposal complies with the following criteria as applicable:

- The site is undergoing development or redevelopment.
- The tree poses a risk to structures.
- There is imminent potential for root or canopy interference with utilities.
- The tree interferes with access or passage on public trails.
- The tree is in poor condition or health (City may require an evaluation by an ISA-certified arborist).
- The tree presents an imminent public hazard (City may require an ISA-certified arborist evaluation if the hazard is not readily apparent).
- The proposal complies with tree retention, replacement, maintenance, and monitoring requirements.

### Tree Replacement Requirements

Significant trees removed, illegally topped, or pruned beyond 25% of the canopy within a critical area must be replaced per the Tree Replacement Requirements Table below, up to a density of 100 trees per acre (including existing trees).

- Trees removed from an approved landscape plan on a developed site must be replaced per TMC 18.52.
- Dead or dying trees removed from an approved landscape plan area must be replaced at a 1:1 ratio in the next appropriate planting season.
- Dead or dying trees within a critical area or its buffer must be left in place as wildlife snags, unless they pose a hazard to structures, facilities, or the public.
- Removal of dead, dying, or hazardous trees in non-developed areas is subject to the Tree Replacement Requirements Table.
- The Director may require additional trees or shrubs to mitigate vegetation loss due to new development.

**Table 18.45.158-1 – Tree Replacement Requirements**

Diameter* of Tree Removed (*measured at height of 4.5 feet from the ground)	Number of Replacement Trees Required
4 - 6 inches (single trunk); 2 inches (any trunk of a multi-trunk tree)	3
Over 6 - 8 inches	4
Over 8 - 20 inches	6
Over 20 inches	8

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## Tree Replacement Fund

If all required replacement trees cannot be accommodated on-site, the applicant must pay into the Tree Replacement Fund per the Consolidated Permit Fee Schedule adopted by City Council resolution.

## Prohibited Tree Topping

Topping of trees is prohibited and will be regulated as removal, requiring replacement per the Tree Replacement Requirements Table.

## Pruning Limitations

- Pruning must not exceed 25% of the canopy within a 36-month period. Pruning beyond this limit will be regulated as removal, requiring tree replacement per the Tree Replacement Requirements Table.
- Trees may only be pruned to lower their height to prevent interference with overhead utility lines with prior approval by the Director.
- Pruning must be carried out under the direction of a Qualified Tree Professional or performed by the utility provider under the direction of a Qualified Tree Professional.
- The crown must be maintained to at least 2/3 of the tree's height prior to pruning.

## SHORELINE TREE PERMITS (TMC 18.44)

### Permit Requirements

A Type 2 Shoreline Tree Removal and Vegetation Clearing Permit is required before any tree removal or site clearing within the shoreline jurisdiction.

### Criteria for Shoreline Tree Removal

To be approved, the proposal must meet the following conditions:

- The site is undergoing development or redevelopment.
- The proposal complies with tree retention, replacement, maintenance, and monitoring requirements.
- One or more of the following applies:
  - The tree poses a risk to structures.
  - There is imminent potential for root or canopy interference with utilities.
  - The tree interferes with access or passage on public trails.
  - The tree is in poor condition or health (City may require an evaluation by an ISA-certified arborist).
  - The tree presents an imminent public hazard (City may require an ISA-certified arborist evaluation if the hazard is not readily apparent).

### Tree Replacement Requirements

Significant trees removed, illegally topped, or pruned beyond 25% of the canopy within the shoreline jurisdiction must be replaced per the Tree Replacement Requirements Table, up to a density of 100 trees per acre (including existing trees).

- Trees removed from an approved landscape plan on a developed site must be replaced per TMC 18.52.

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- Dead or dying trees removed from an approved landscape plan area must be replaced at a 1:1 ratio in the next appropriate planting season.
- Dead or dying trees within the buffer or undeveloped upland portion of the Shoreline Jurisdiction must be left in place as wildlife snags, unless they pose a hazard to structures, facilities, or the public.
- Removal of non-hazardous trees in non-developed areas is subject to the Tree Replacement Requirements Table.
- The Director or Planning Commission may require additional trees or shrubs to mitigate vegetation loss due to new development.

**Tree Replacement Requirements**

Diameter* of Tree Removed (*measured at height of 4.5 feet from the ground)	Number of Replacement Trees Required
4 - 6 inches (single trunk); 2 inches (any trunk of a multi-trunk tree)	3
Over 6 - 8 inches	4
Over 8 - 20 inches	6
Over 20 inches	8

## Tree Replacement Fund

If all required replacement trees cannot be accommodated on-site, off-site tree replacement within the shoreline jurisdiction may be allowed at a site approved by the City. If no suitable off-site location is available, the applicant must pay into the Tree Replacement Fund per the adopted fee resolution.

## Large Woody Debris (LWD) Requirements

- When a tree suitable for use as LWD is permitted for removal from the shoreline buffer, the tree trunk and root ball (if possible) must be saved for use in a restoration project elsewhere in the shoreline jurisdiction.
- The applicant is responsible for the cost of moving the removed tree(s) to a location designated by the City.
- If no restoration project or storage location is available, the Director may waive this requirement.
- Trees removed in the shoreline jurisdiction outside the buffer shall be placed as LWD in the buffer (not on the bank), if feasible.