

TREE PERMITS - RESIDENTIAL

(Non-Critical Area or Shoreline)

Permit Type: Tree Permit
Permit Subtype: Single Family Property Tree Removal

City of Tukwila - Permit Center
6300 Southcenter Blvd, Suite 100,
Tukwila, WA 98188
[www.tukwilawa.gov/
departments/permit-center/](http://www.tukwilawa.gov/departments/permit-center/)



This checklist is intended for tree work located within residential areas and not part of a formal landscape plan (such as those required for commercial or multifamily developments).

If proposed tree or landscaping scope of work is located on a commercial, industrial, or multifamily property, please refer to the Tree Permits - Commercial checklist or contact City Staff.

Is your tree in a shoreline or critical area?

If a tree is located within the Shoreline Jurisdiction or a critical area (wetland, stream, steep slope, etc.) or its buffer, a **Shoreline or Critical Area Tree Permit** is required instead of this permit. Use [Tukwila iMap](#) to check whether your property falls within these areas, then refer to the [Tree Permit – Critical Areas & Shoreline checklist](#).

Applying for a Building or Public Works Permit?

You might not need a separate Tree Permit — tree review can often happen as part of that application. Still follow the requirements here and include all attachments. Additional tree review fees may apply.

If your tree is not in a shoreline or critical area, continue with this checklist.

SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST

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

	File Name	Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	Affidavit	Completed and notarized ' Affidavit of Ownership and Hold Harmless Permission to Enter Property '.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Permit Application Form	Tree Permit Application Form describing location and scope of work.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site Map & Photos	See Fig 1 – Sample Site Plan on page 3.

PROCESS & EXPIRATION

- Type 1 administrative decision under TMC 18.104; no public hearing required.
- Exceptions to standard requirements may be available under TMC 18.54.140.
- Permits expire one year from issuance.

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Step 1 — Is your tree work exempt from permitting?

The following activities do not require a Tree Permit.

- Trees under 6" DBH on a Low-Density Residential single-family property.
- Dead trees outside shoreline jurisdiction, a sensitive area, or its buffer.
- Routine maintenance: pruning up to 25% of crown per 36-month period, noxious weed or invasive species control, or ROW maintenance per TMC 11.20.
- Emergency removal of high- or extreme-risk trees posing an immediate threat. Submit a permit application within one week; the Director may grant additional time.
- ROW trees removed as part of a capital project with a landscaping component that includes tree replacement, where adequate space exists.
- Trees covered by a Class I-IV forest practices permit issued by DNR.

If your work does not qualify for an exemption, a Tree Permit is required. Continue to Step 2.

What are Significant Trees?

These are trees with a Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) measurement equal to or greater than 6' as defined in TMC 18.54. If your work impacts a tree of this size it is not exempt and a permit is required. When in doubt, contact the Planning division — staff can help you determine whether your tree qualifies before you apply.

Step 2 — How many trees am I permitted to remove?

Except for Heritage Trees, the removal of Significant Trees within any 36-month period on a property zoned Community Residential and improved with a single-family or middle housing dwelling, is permitted, subject to the requirements of Table A below.

**Table A – Single Family and Middle Housing
Tree Removal without Replacement Limits**

Tree Size (Diameter at Breast Height)	# of Trees in 36 month period that can be removed without replacement ⁽¹⁾
>6–8"	4
>8–18"	2
>18"	1 and no other trees

(1) A combination of trees of different sizes may be removed without replacement so long as the total number of trees removed does not exceed the number allowed for the largest tree removed in a 36-month period. See Tree Permit Application for additional details.

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Step 3 — What are the replacement requirements?

Each existing Significant Tree removed, including removal of trees in easements and rights-of-way for the purposes of constructing public streets and utilities, shall be replaced with new tree(s), based on the size of the existing tree as shown below, up to a maximum density of 100 new trees per acre, generally 12-15 feet apart. If the number of required replacement trees exceeds site capacity, payment is required into the City’s Tree Fund.

Table B (below) establishes tree replacement ratios when Significant, Exceptional or Heritage Trees are removed. For properties zoned Community Residential and improved with a single-family dwelling, when the number of trees permitted to be removed in a 36-month period, as shown in Table A, has been exceeded, the replacement ratios set forth in Table B apply.

Trees damaged due to natural disasters, such as wind storms, hail, ice or snow storms, and earthquakes, are not required to be replaced. Trees determined to be Defective by the City or a Qualified Tree Professional, are not required to be replaced. Any tree removal on undeveloped properties is subject to replacement ratios in Table B. Illegal topping and pruning more than 25% in a 36-month period is subject to replacement ratios in Table B.

Table B – Tree Replacement Ratios

Tree Size (Diameter at Breast Height)	Replacement Ratio
6–8"	1:1
>8–18"	1:2
>18"	1:3

Replacement Standards

- Replacement applies to trees removed from private property, easements, and rights-of-way for public street or utility work.
- Replacement trees must comply with TMC 18.54.160 – Approved and Prohibited Trees.
- Property owners are responsible for the long-term care and survival of replacement trees.
- Any replacement tree that dies must be replanted during the next appropriate planting season.

Tree Fund Payment Option

If the site cannot accommodate all required replacement trees, the applicant may pay into the City Tree Fund per TMC 18.54.100 (fee schedule set by City Council resolution). This is a last resort — the applicant must submit a narrative demonstrating why on-site replacement is infeasible, and the City’s Urban Environmentalist must concur.

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FIGURE 1 - SAMPLE SITE PLAN AND PHOTOS



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Can I remove a hazardous tree without a permit?

Emergencies yes: remove first, apply within one week. Non-emergency hazardous trees require a permit before removal. A tree is hazardous if it has structural defects or disease creating a high failure probability, threatens people or property, and cannot be made safe through pruning. Non-obvious hazards will likely require an ISA/TRAQ arborist report. Unpermitted non-emergency removals may be subject to code enforcement.

What if my tree is dead or dying?

Depends on location. Single-family properties outside shoreline/critical areas may generally remove dead trees without a permit; confirm with staff first. Commercial/multifamily dead trees should be replaced in kind; a permit is required to change species. In shoreline or critical areas, dead trees should stay unless a hazard; a permit is required for any removal, and replacement applies.

Do I need an arborist report?

Not always. Single-family removals within the Table A allowance don't require one. Critical area trees, or non-obvious hazards or health concerns, will likely require a report from an ISA-certified arborist with TRAQ. Find certified arborists at pnwisa.org.

My neighbor's tree is causing problems. Can the City help?

No, this is a civil matter. If a survey confirms the tree straddles the property line, both owners must consent to removal or significant impact.

What about trees in the right-of-way?

ROW trees are owned by the City or State. Adjacent owners are responsible for routine maintenance but may not remove or harm a ROW tree without the owner's approval. Contact City staff before any ROW tree work.

How do I show tree locations without a survey? An annotated satellite image (Tukwila iMap or Google Maps) is acceptable. Show property lines, critical area or shoreline buffers, tree sizes and species, photos, and utility locations if identifying replanting sites. Call 811 before digging.