



Do I Need a Permit to Remove or Prune a Tree?

Private Trees

Private Trees are trees on property that is not owned or managed by the City. Pruning a Private Tree does not require a permit unless the property is located in an environmental or Pleasant Valley Natural Resource overlay zone.

A permit will always be required to remove a Private Tree if the tree is 12 inches in diameter or larger. Trees located in Plan Districts or environmental overlay zones may be subject to other requirements. See Resources below to confirm if you are located in one of these areas. Some permits for removing Private Trees can be issued without an on-site inspection. This is true for nuisance species trees, trees located within 10 feet of a building, and up to four healthy, non-nuisance trees less than 20 inches in diameter.

The City will evaluate requests to remove large Private Trees when the tree is 20 inches in diameter or larger or for five or more trees 12 inches or larger. Trees that are dead, dying, or dangerous will be issued a permit for removal. Healthy trees will be evaluated based on the Standards and Review Factors in Title 11 Trees, including but not limited to the objectives of the property owner, the potential impacts on public safety, and the character of the neighborhood. This permitting process requires a City Tree Inspector to visit the property, a public notice period, and provides a public appeal option. Appeals will be heard by the Urban Forestry Appeals Board.

Street Trees

A Street Tree is defined as any tree growing in or upon any City-managed street. Generally, Street Trees are easily identified as the trees located in the planting strip between the curb and the sidewalk. In some cases, a tree may appear to be located on private property, but is actually located within the right-of-way and is considered a Street Tree. Property lines are often located several feet behind the sidewalk – trees located in this area are Street Trees. In situations where the right-of-way is only a roadway without sidewalks, the distance from the edge of the roadway to the property line location is typically 15 feet beyond the pavement.

Property owners will continue to be responsible for maintenance within this right-of-way and permits must be obtained for planting, pruning, or removing Street Trees of any size under the updated regulations (see back of this handout for more details).

Measuring Tree Diameter

The diameter of a tree is measured at 4.5 feet above the ground. The best way to do this is to wrap a measuring tape or string around the trunk to get the circumference and then divide this number by pi (3.14). A 12-inch diameter tree is about 37.5 inches in circumference.

Resources

To learn more about the rules for removing and pruning trees or check the status of a permit you can visit www.portlandoregon.gov/trees or get help from Tree Project staff by calling (503) 823-TREE (8733) or emailing trees@portlandoregon.gov.

Quick Reference: Planting and Pruning Private and Street Trees

	Activity	Permit Required?	Cost
PRIVATE TREES	Plant	No	N/A
	Prune*	No	N/A
	Remove* ≥ 12" in diameter	Yes	\$35
STREET TREES	Plant	Yes	None
	Prune	Yes	None
	Remove	Yes	\$35
* Requirements may vary for properties in Plan District or environmental overlay zones. For more details see www.portlandoregon.gov/trees/removalpermits or Chapter 11.40 Tree Permit Requirements (No Associated Development) of Title 11 Trees			