



TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH
California

Tree Removal Guidelines

February 2019

A “**Tree**” is defined as “Any woody plant which has a trunk with a diameter of twelve inches (12”) or greater, measured at four feet, six inches (4’-6”) above natural grade”.

A “**Grove**” is defined as “a group of at least five (5) woody plants of the same type with a diameter of six inches (6”) or greater, measured at four feet, six inches (4’-6”) above natural grade”.

If proposed removals may constitute a “grove”, the arborist report shall include an analysis of the impacts the tree removal will have on neighboring properties. Additional fees may be required if review by the Town’s consulting arborist is required.

Regardless of trunk size, any trees located within the front Right-of-Way are required to have an Encroachment permit issued.

If you are planning on Stump Grinding, a USA number is required (regardless of a permit issuance or not)

I. Tree Removal Which Is Related to Property Improvements

(Any site where construction work, including landscaping, is also proposed on the property)

All tree removals related to the construction of property improvements, along with the plans for property improvements, require design review & approval from the Planning Department (by ADRB or Administratively). Once approved, a permit must be obtained from the Building Department.

II. Tree Removal Which Is Not Related to Property Improvements

(No additional site or construction work is proposed on the property)

A. On lots which have improvements (such as a house): Design review approval (by the ADRB or Administratively), and a tree removal permit (issued by the Building Department), is required on a lot which contains a structure or other improvements and the tree proposed for removal has a trunk that is 36” or greater in diameter (circumference 113” or greater), measured at 4’-6” above natural grade.

B. On Vacant Lots: A tree removal permit, issued by the City Engineer (or his authorized representative), is required when the tree is located on a vacant lot, regardless of the cost of the removal. Submit the following:

- A site plan showing the location, species, size of the tree(s);
- An arborist report;
- A letter indicating why removal is requested, and;
- A proposal for replanting and maintenance.
- The fee is based on valuation; however, additional fees may be required if the Town’s consulting arborist is required, or if a public notice must be prepared (depending on the scope and nature of the proposed removal).

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III. Immediate Hazards

There is an expedited process if the tree to be removed is an immediate hazard.

A. The applicant shall submit the following to the Building/Planning Department:

- A site plan showing the location, species, size of the tree (relative to property lines, the house, neighboring properties, the street, etc.);
- A report from a certified arborist that clearly states that the tree represents an “**immediate hazard**”, meaning that because of disease or damage or danger to persons or property, the tree needs to be removed within the next thirty days. The arborist report must include **photos** and a **recommendation for replacement**;
- The species and size of the replacement tree/s (*California native species are encouraged as replacement trees, but other varieties may be approved if recommended by a Certified Arborist or Landscape Architect*); and,
- If the proposal removals constitute a grove, (*a group of at least five (5) woody plants of the same type with a diameter of (6”) or greater, measured at (4’-6”) above natural grade*), the arborist report must include an analysis of the impacts the tree removal will have on neighboring properties. Proposed removal of a grove may require additional fees and review by the Town’s consulting arborist;
- The base fee for this review is \$154, plus additional fees based on the valuation of the work to be completed. These additional fees will be assessed by the Building Division upon submittal of the permit application for the tree removal and replacement. Additional fees may be required if review by the Town’s consulting arborist is required. A final inspection is required once all work is completed.

Please note: The Hillsborough Municipal Code does not provide regulations or standards for issues between neighbors regarding the trimming of branches on trees that may be overhanging a common property line. Such issues must be resolved between the involved property owners.

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